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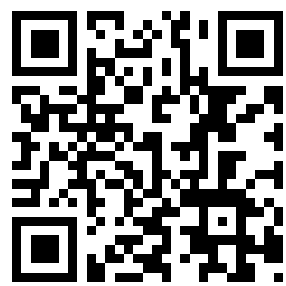

TWENTY YEARS AFTER

THE
BATTLEFIELDS
OF
1914-18

THEN
AND
NOW

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TWENTY YEARS AFTER

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TWENTY YEARS AFTER

THE BATTLEFIELDS OF 1914-18: THEN AND NOW

Edited by
MAJ. GEN. SIR ERNEST SWINTON
K.B.E., C.B.

VOLUME TWO

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CHAPTER XLIV

THE POETRY OF THE GREAT WAR

The Great War inspired many men, and in divers ways. This tremendous upheaval undoubtedly made a profound impression upon the minds of those whose duty led them to the battlefields, but only a few found themselves able to express their feelings in verse. Yet of that small company there were not lacking those who were spared to write lines which, like The Flowers of the Forest, *will be handed down to many a generation yet unborn. Such words as "At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them," and "If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In Flanders fields," are unlikely ever to be forgotten.*

It is a curious fact that of the two best-remembered poems of the War one was written by a poet who was not a soldier, and the other by a soldier who was not a poet. Mr. Laurence Binyon has written many beautiful pieces, but none which is, or ever will be, so famous as the great *For the Fallen* with its affecting central verse:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Colonel John McCrae wrote only one piece that has attained any fame at all, but that is *In Flanders Fields*:

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

The Origin of Poppy Day

McCrae, who was a doctor with the Canadian Army, died on active service in January, 1918. It would be as meaningless as useless to submit his poem to the rigid scrutiny of literary criticism. It is most unlikely that either he or the editor of *Punch*, who first printed it, in any degree foresaw the hold which it was to take on the imagination of the nation. But it became that rare thing, a genuinely popular poem, and it is because of it that we now wear poppies on November 11th.

When the War began, many people spared the time to wonder what effect the world-shattering event would have on the writing of poetry. One of our periodic "poetic revivals" had begun a couple of years before, and it was equally permissible to think that this catastrophe, slashing across the web of ordinary life, would stimulate the poets, or that it would prove too much for them.

We heard first, naturally, from the older poets who could not stand in queues outside the recruiting-offices. The late Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, was generally acknowledged not to have done too well. Kipling, not for the first time, voiced the feeling of the country when the official voice was silent or halting. His great poem on the outbreak of war is a magnificent expression of the philosophy of his later life, when he had come to hate with all the vehemence of his nature any war but one in a just cause:

No easy hopes or lies
Shall bring us to our goal
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will, and soul.
There is but one task for all—
One life for each to give.
Who stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?

The sacrifice for which he called was made, and much of the poetry of the War consists in laments over, or panegyrics on, those who gave their lives. A. E. Housman's *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries*, one of the finest poems of its kind in the language, is well known. Less familiar is another epitaph, very characteristic of its author, and printed after his death:

Here dead we lie because we did not choose
To live and shame the land from which we sprung.
Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose;
But young men think it is, and we were young.

Those Who Remained at Home

It is not surprising that this theme haunted the men who could do nothing better than sit at home and unburden their hearts with words. We find it (here a lament for a personal loss) in Sir John Squire's *To a Bulldog* and in his *The March*:

I heard a voice that cried, "Make way for those that died!"
And all the coloured crowd like ghosts at morning fled;
And down the waiting road, rank after rank, there strode,
In mute and measured march a hundred thousand dead.

(That was written after the then shocking announcement that there had been 100,000 killed in the British Army alone.)

But if there was a tendency to emphasise the theme of sheer loss, there were other notes to be sounded. Chesterton sounded one in his nobly rhetorical *Wife of Flanders*:

Low and brown barns thatched and repatched and tattered
Where I had seven sons until to-day,
A little hill of hay your spur has scattered . . .
This is not Paris. You have lost the way.
. . . . . .
Unhappy, can I give you back your honour?
Though I forgave would any man forget?
While all the great green land has trampled on her
The treason and terror of the night we met.

Not any more in vengeance or in pardon
An old wife bargains for a bean that's hers.
You have no word to break: no heart to harden.
Ride on and prosper. You have lost your spurs.

And Hardy sounded another with:

In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just
And that braggarts must
Surely bite the dust,
Press we to the field ungrieving,
In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
Leaving all that here can win us;
Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away.

Rushed into Warfare's Net

But what of the young men who were taking part, or might be expected to take part, in that "poetic revival"? Many of them were swept into the net of warfare—or, to speak more accurately, rushed into it. Some, for reasons beyond their own control, were condemned to be stay-at-homes like much older men. But almost all who were able to serve went and served.

Their mood at the beginning was that of the whole nation. There was in it a remarkable absence of bravado. They did not want to be killed any more than

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they wanted to kill. But they conceived that a duty had been laid upon them, and they felt also, sometimes, that they were lucky, as poets, in that it was just on them that it was laid. They had been singled out for a severe testing, and they hoped to be worthy of it. Sometimes, again, it seemed to them that Fate had provided an answer for the problems that so often oppress sensitive young men.

Of these poets Rupert Brooke was the type, as well as one of the best. There was complete sincerity in his cry :

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary . . .

Brooke was already one of the leaders of what was beginning to be called " Georgian Poetry." He was a brilliant young man, whose gifts, both physical and intellectual, had brought him an extraordinary success—a success so great that he had begun to ponder the littleness of the world and to be extremely dissatisfied with himself. The War offered him an opportunity to dedicate himself to something other than his own career. After a brief experience under fire during the Antwerp Expedition, he went with the Royal Naval Division to Gallipoli, but, before the landing, he died of blood-poisoning in a French hospital-ship off Scyros, on April 23rd, 1915.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

PLAYING AT DICKYBIRDS

The intrepid climbers in this photograph are members of a Canadian Signal Section, and are engaged in fixing an emergency telephone-communication. One of the chief difficulties with which telephonists had to contend was that bad insulation would frequently enable the enemy to overhear messages transmitted to or from the forward areas. The menace of his obtaining valuable information in this manner created a most dangerous situation during the first half of 1916.

Julian Grenfell's Last Song

Less than a month later died another brilliant young man, who was, both then and later, less well-known as a poet, but who had received a similar inspiration. A week after Brooke had died Julian Grenfell, who had already earned the D.S.O., sent to a friend a poem containing the lines :

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and light from the glowing earth
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth ;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.
. . . . . .
The blackbird sings to him, " Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you may not sing another ;
Brother, sing."

It was his last song, for he was mortally wounded, and the company of poets lost a brave man and a good soldier.

But his spirit was widespread. There is perhaps no better expression of it than we have from Ivor Gurney, who fought in the ranks as an infantryman, and, because of the strains and stresses of war, has never quite done justice to his remarkable genius. He was that unusual composite, at once a musician and a poet, who might have won equal renown either with notes or words. But it is with words that we are concerned here, and these are some of his, an address *To the Poet before Battle :*

Now, youth, the hour of thy dread passion comes :
Thy lovely things must all be laid away ;
And thou, as others, must face the riven day
Unstirred by rattle of the rolling drums,
Or bugles' strident cry. When mere noise numbs
The sense of being, the fear-sick soul doth sway,
Remember thy great craft's honour, that they may say
Nothing in shame of poets. Then the crumbs
Of praise the little versemen joyed to take
Shall be forgotten : then they must know we are,
For all our skill in words, equal in might
And strong of mettle as those we honoured ; make
The name of poet terrible in just war,
And like a crown of honour upon the fight.

With him and those like him we may perhaps link Alan Seeger, the American poet, who, living in Paris when the War broke out, and feeling an intense devotion to France and to all that, for him, she represented, thought it his duty to join the French Foreign Legion and to

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offer his life for her. He was killed in 1916, but not before he had written :

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

Home Thoughts from Laventie

Another young man who might have done fine work if he had lived was Edward Wyndham Tennant, who was only a boy when he wrote *Home Thoughts from Laventie :*

Green gardens in Laventie !
Soldiers only know the street
Where the mud is churned and splashed about
By battle-wending feet ;
And yet beside one stricken house there is a glimpse of grass.
Look for it when you pass.

. . . . . .

The fairest and most fragrant
Of the many sweets we found,
Was a little bush of Daphne flower
Upon a grassy mound,
And so thick were the blossoms set, and so divine the scent
That we were well content.

Photo : Howard Coster.

COMPOSER OF *FOR THE FALLEN*

Mr. Laurence Binyon, who was not a soldier, bears the distinction of having written one of the two best-remembered poems of the War—the Armistice Day verses entitled *For the Fallen*, which were set to music by Sir Edward Elgar. The four lines of this poem quoted in the text are known throughout the Empire.

Photo : Howard Coster.

"THE VOICE OF 1917"

The chief merit of Mr. Siegfried Sassoon as a War poet was that he brought home the bitter realities of war to the minds of those at home who were still living in the atmosphere of Rupert Brooke's passionate idealism. In the middle of the War Mr. Sassoon, a courageous soldier, suddenly turned pacifist : the authorities put it down to shell-shock. Later, not through any reversal of ideas, but simply to be with his men, he returned to the Front—to be wounded once more.

Hungry for spring I bent my head,
The perfume fanned my face,
And all my soul was dancing
In that little lovely place,
Dancing with a measured step from wrecked and shattered towns
Away . . . upon the Downs.

It would be doing an injustice to a delightful and touching scribble of verse to make these lines a text for a discourse on the change which came over the poetry of the War. But one thing is obvious about them : they are written by a man who has seen service, and has seen enough of it to be able to see other things beyond the first glamour and excitement. It is possible to say without disrespect that Brooke's poems are those of an inspired recruit. They express the feelings of a man who has not yet experienced the day-in, day-out routine of warfare.

But now we come to the young man who is old enough to be a seasoned soldier and an accomplished poet at the same time. Here is verse about directly-observed fact, and it is written by a great number of persons and touches all parts of the world. Mr. Francis Brett Young accompanied, as a medical officer, General Smuts's army in the East African campaign, and wrote some admirable poetry about it. Francis

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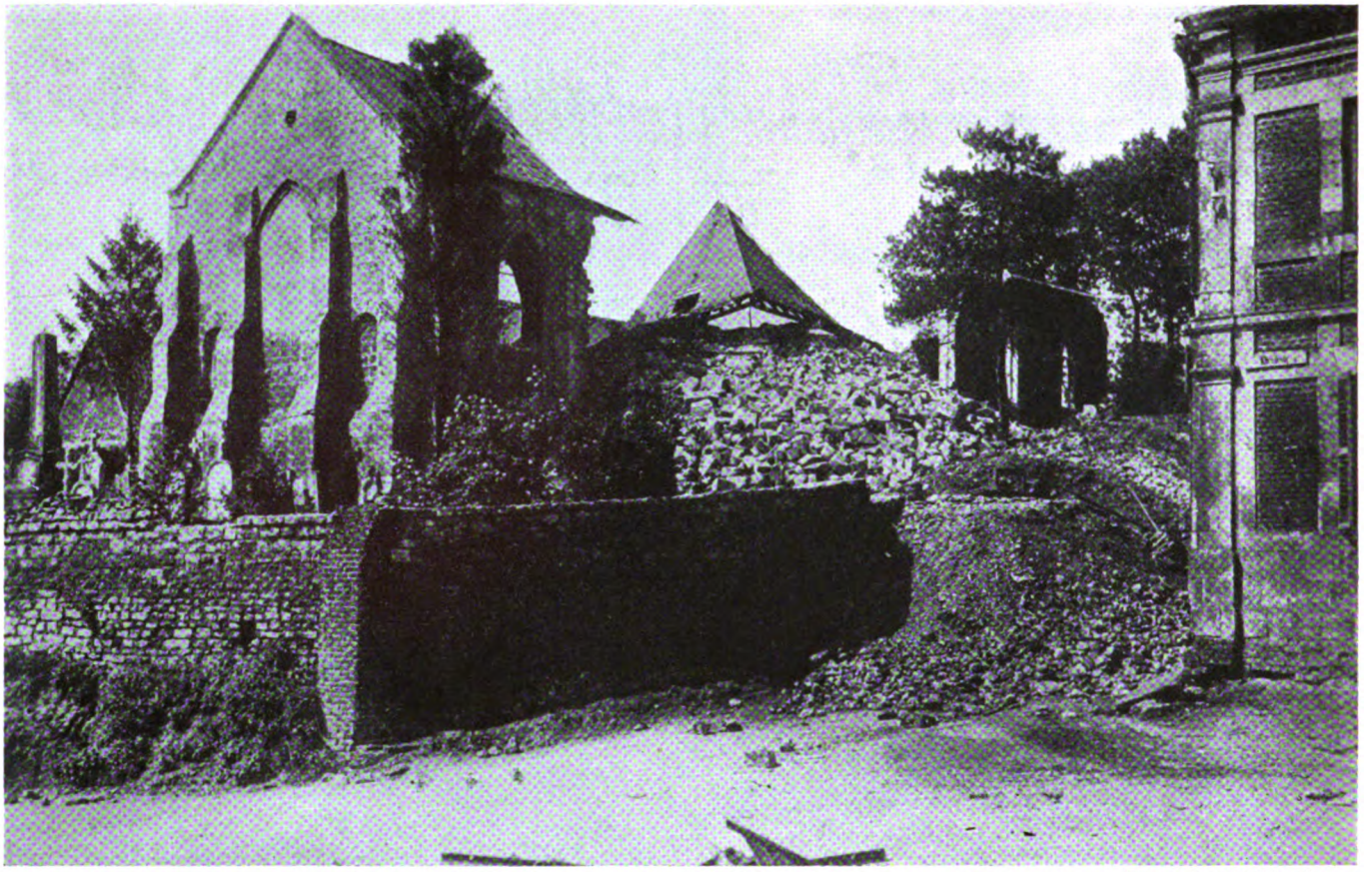

Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

IN A VILLAGE NEAR GONNELIEU

Banteux lies on the west bank of the Scheldt Canal, in the angle formed by the forking of the Cambrai—Péronne and Cambrai—Le Catelet roads. Gonnelieu is 3 km. to westward. Nearby is Banteux Ravine, or "Ravine 22" in French nomenclature, which figured prominently in the Battle of Cambrai, late November, 1917. This ravine extended from Banteux westward between Gonnelieu and Villers-Guislain. In the above photograph we see the ruins of Banteux Church.

Ledwidge was in the Salonica affair and wrote:

The sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark the bells on every hill!
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,
Wandering wide a little piece
Thro' the evening red and still,
Stopping where the pathways cease,
Cropping with a hurried will.

A Lone Poet of the Air

Jeffery Day, who was shot down over the North Sea, wrote:

My turning wing inclines towards the ground;
The ground itself glides up with graceful swing
And at the plane's far tip twirls slowly round,
Then drops from sight again beneath the wing
To slip away serenely as before,
A cubist-patterned carpet on the floor.

(It is curious that, since Day wrote, flying, whether military or civil, has produced hardly any poetry of much account.)

In France, Mr. Robert Graves was writing in *Two Fusiliers:*

By wire and wood and stake we're bound,
By Fricourt and by Festubert,
By whipping rain, by the sun's glare,
By all the misery and loud sound,
By a Spring day,
By Picard clay.
Show me the two so closely bound
As we, by the wet bond of blood,
By friendship, blossoming from mud,
By Death: we faced him, and we found
Beauty in Death,
In dead men breath.

The other Fusilier was perhaps Mr. Siegfried Sassoon, who did not find beauty in death, but only a hideous ugliness against which he passionately protested. With him we have arrived at the year 1917.

A selection of War poems could be made which would reflect not only its events but also all its changing moods; and of those moods, after that of the opening, that of 1917 was the most strongly marked. It was the year when many people began to think that the issue between peace and war, between killing and not killing, was a great deal more important than any issue that there could possibly be between the belligerents. Mr. Sassoon's poetry dealt with stark facts:

Lost in the swamp and welter of the pit,
He founders off the duck-boards; only he knows
Each flash and spouting crash,—each instant lit
When gloom reveals the streaming rain. He goes
Heavily, blindly on. And, while he blunders,
"Could anything be worse than this?"—he wonders,
Remembering how he saw those Germans run,
Screaming for mercy among the stumps of trees:
Green-faced, they dodged and darted: there was one
Livid with terror, clutching at his knees . . .
Our chaps were sticking 'em like pigs . . . "O hell!"
He thought—"there's things in war one dare not tell
Poor father sitting safe at home, who reads
Of dying heroes and their deathless deeds."

Dispelling False Sentiment

In pieces like this Mr. Sassoon was a journalist rather than a poet, but he did succeed in saying things in verse which he would not have been allowed to say in prose. And what he said was salutary. It did not weaken the will of the nation to carry the War on to its end, but it did bring realities to the minds of many at home who were still thinking in terms of Rupert Brooke's idealism. His intention was quite simply so to sicken people with the facts of war that they would stop it without thinking about anything else. If anyone was ever entitled to make this appeal, it was he. He was not an arm-chair

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pacifist, he was a soldier with a reputation for fantastic valour. And then he carried his conclusions to their logical end.

After a spell at home recovering from a wound, he announced that he did not propose to return, and that the authorities might take such measures with him as seemed to them best. Presumably he expected to be court-martialled and shot. Certainly he ran that risk, since the authorities in war-time have much to think of, and are apt in particular cases to act without thinking at all. But they did not shoot Mr. Sassoon: they simply treated him as a shell-shock case. And then he did the bravest thing of all. He could no longer bear the thought of his men at the front enduring the miseries from which he had escaped, and he intimated his willingness to return to duty. He did return, and was wounded again.

He was the voice of 1917 in that he helped so powerfully to strip away the romantic illusions of 1914 and show the War for the beastly thing it was. But the nation resolved that, however beastly it might be, it had to be finished. As another poet wrote in the same year:

We will arise. Oh, not as then with singing,
But silence in our mouths and no word said,
Though wracks of that lost glory round us clinging
Shame us with broken oaths we swore the dead,
But steadfast in humility we rise,
Hoping no glory, having merited none,
Through the long night to toil with aching eyes
And hope that our humbler hearts may earn the sun.

From Comedy to Censure

Meanwhile the poets in their several ways went on. Mr. A. P. Herbert, who had written *Half-hours at Helles* and other celebrations of the lighter side of war, wrote a smashing poem about the inspection of a division just out of the line after a gruelling experience, and disinclined to receive in the proper spirit the Corps Commander's "greasy benisons upon success." This poem, it may be remarked, found no entry to the pages where his others had usually been welcome.

Mr. Edmund Blunden looked at the whole thing in a way quite of his own. He was a young soldier, but he was also a precocious poet, and he shows beyond all question that no horror was quite enough to dull in his mind the growing and avid sensitiveness of youth. He wrote in retrospect:

War might make his worst grimace,
And still my mind in armour good
Turned aside in every place
And saw bright day through the black wood
There the lyddite vapoured foul,
But there I got myself a rose;
By the shrapnelled lock I'd prowl
To see below the proud pike doze.

In an odd way which it would be difficult to describe, Mr. Blunden took the War in his stride. For him it might have been part of a man's normal experience, like first seeing and realising the hawthorn in flower, or falling in love for the first time. In normal times the young poet feels a strong contrast between the world of the 8.15 train and compulsory office hours, and his desired world in which Nature reveals herself and he has time to express himself. It is hard to avoid thinking that Mr. Blunden felt the War as such an intrusion. Under the title *Mont de Cassel* he wrote:

Here on the sunnier scarp of the hill let us rest,
And hoard the hastening hour,
Find a mercy unexpressed
In the chance wild flower
We may find on the pathway side, or the glintering flint,
Or other things so small and unregarded:
Descry far windows fired with the sun, to whom
Nothing is small or mean.
To us let the war be a leering ghost now shriven.

Photo: Keystone.

A VILLAGE RE-BORN

In the Cambrai battle a German counter-attack was made, on November 30th, between Vendhuille and Masnières—a front of more than 10 miles. From Masnières south to Banteux four enemy divisions were employed against three British holding this area, while south of Banteux one enemy division and various brigades of two others attacked one half of the single British division here holding the line. The result of this attack was that we had to fall back from Banteux to behind Gonnelieu. The latter, however, was recovered on December 1st. Above is Banteux's new church.

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Potentially the Greatest of All

Another poet, less fortunate than Mr. Blunden in both his experience of life at the front and in his death, was Wilfrid Owen, who may have been—at any rate potentially—the greatest of them all. He was killed at the crossing of the Sambre Canal on November 4th, 1918, but not before he had written some poetry which will live. Perhaps his best-known piece is *Greater Love*:

Red lips are not so red
As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.
Kindness of wooed and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure.
O Love, your eyes lose lure
When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude
Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,
Rolling and rolling there
Where God seems not to care;
Till the fierce Love they bear
Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

Owen's poetry was of the extreme agony of the last months of the War, and some of it is rough, some unfinished. It is a thousand pities that he did not survive that last week to meditate in peace on his experience. He might conceivably (from no other man was it more likely) have produced the great poem of the War, round which all the others would have stood like foot-hills round a peak.

No such poem, or group of poems, has been written in English or any other language, nor does it now seem probable that any will be. But it can be said that the English poets did not fail to make their own record of the greatest of our national ordeals and experiences. The treasury of War-poetry is a rich one, and he who reads the best of it can understand what both the soldiers and those at home were feeling and thinking. Of no other war in our history can this be said in anything like the same degree—and that alone would be enough to prove that in 1914–1918 we were for the first time a nation in arms. This was a new sort of war and young men responded to it in a new way. Their spirit is shown by the fact that, even in the midst of the struggle, those among them who had the gift of speech responded so readily. The War left many disagreeable legacies behind it, but it did leave a treasury of poetry which is as sincere as it is vivid. One cannot indulge in guesses as to the judgment of future generations. Future generations, for all we can tell, may never have the opportunity of learning to read. But we to-day can say that in this body of work an experience of our youth is poignantly preserved.

TIN HATS

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A group of riflemen and Lewis-gunners of the King's Liverpool Regiment photographed in the trenches during April, 1916. The famous "tin hat," or manganese steel helmet, although of British design, was the outcome of steel helmets issued to the French troops in the spring of 1915. The British helmet weighed 2 lb., and was capable of resisting shrapnel at 750 ft. per second. Manufacture was begun in November, 1915, and by March, 1916, 140,000 had reached our forces in France, while smaller quantities had gone to troops in other theatres. Delivery of the first 1,000,000 helmets was completed by the first week of July, 1916.

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CHAPTER XLV

THE SOMME AND THE NEW ARMIES

The Somme Battle, which, with Verdun and Passchendaele, ranks among the bloodiest ever fought, stands as the first great achievement of the Territorial Force and the New Army. At the time, and for many years after, the casualties in this epic fight were regarded as utterly disproportionate to the progress made. To-day, from authentic sources, we know that this estimate was false. Among the shell-holes and shattered villages of that once fair countryside, the Somme Valley, our men suffered, but at the same time, the élite of the German Army were mown down. Never was it to be quite the same again. In this, and in the two following chapters, appears the story of that which will ever live in the memories of those who fought there as an ordeal unsurpassed.

With the coming of summer, 1916, excitement was rising apace behind the British lines. From the middle of May and on through June every symptom of an impending attack grew more obvious. All along the front, well clear of the trenches, there was training, continuous and tense, obviously intended for a great assault on the German lines.

A Rigid Programme in Rehearsal

Shallow trenches representing German defences, just as they were shown on aerial photographs, had been dug in the fields well away in the rear. Flags of various colours denoted our own lines, and the first, second, and third German lines. Whistles would blow incessantly. Every battalion was rehearsing the process of assaulting this defence system. Some shook their heads, maintaining that such a rigid programme as was there being evolved could never be carried out in reality. Others, knowing the weaknesses of imperfectly-trained officers and men, thought differently.

The methods which had gone towards making the highly-skilled soldier of 1914 the fit instrument for any type of warfare, were now out of place. Training was no longer to be based on the slow, meticulous teaching of the regimental officers and N.C.O.'s; on long hours and days devoted to musketry. Everything gave way to a system of mass-production, designed to answer some simple specific requirements. The War could no longer be regarded as a struggle between the artilleryman and infantryman trained on individualistic lines; it was becoming a war of masses and of material.

Still, there was much company-training, with bombing exercises, bayonet practices, and musketry. The troops were kept fully occupied, since, when training was not to the fore, there were endless fatigues. Tours of duty in the front line came regularly, with digging and making ready for the battle, since the front had yet to be prepared for a great attack.

Every road leading to this front was crowded with traffic to such an extent that transport was often lucky if it could cover three miles in two hours; artillery convoys, in particular, being as thick "as flies round jam."[1] Fortunately the weather remained dry and fine, for otherwise all this haulage must have wrecked the roads. As it was, the heavy guns which were brought to their positions by tractors would disorganise the best of time-tables. Mounting dumps of shell pointed to the magnitude of the impending effort. Indeed, the growth of the artillery was truly remarkable for this epoch of the War, though it was to be far surpassed by that which was thought necessary only one year later.

Artillery Statistics

Setting aside the guns belonging to reserve formations, there were brought up the following numbers:—18-pdrs, 808; 4·5 howitzers, 202; 6-inch, 104; 8-inch, 64; 9·2-inch, 60; 12-inch, 11; 15-inch, 6. In addition, there were French guns to assist the British. The quantity of ammunition to be fired by the artillery of the Fourth Army amounted to: 18-pounders, 2,600,000 rounds; 4·5 howitzer, 260,000; 6-inch, 100,000; the remaining calibres in proportion. And even these formidable figures were in the end to prove inadequate. The total of one field gun per 21 yards and one heavy gun per 57 yards of front was soon seen to be insufficient, and in the near future was to be multiplied twice and thrice over.

Another great event before the battle, too, was the appearance of the new anti-shrapnel helmet, the historic "tin hat" or "trench bowler." Heavy and badly balanced, in wear it proved unnecessarily hot on the head, owing to its lack of ventilation. Subsequently it came to be carried on the pack unless circumstances required it to be put on; but at first it was invariably worn on the head. The addition of this weight, together with the new anti-gas respirator, made a substantial increase in the load already carried by the infantryman. To his disgust, however, little allowance was made for the increased burden in the shape of any reduction in the rate or duration of the marches expected of him.

In spite of the hard work and unfamiliarity of many of their tasks it was amazing how the troops accepted all privations and discomforts with complete serenity. Their spirit left the old campaigners amazed: it was indeed a New Army, in every sense of the word. The men trained almost with avidity; they dug with zeal. No trace here of Trade Union rules or hours.

In the intervals of toil—and these were rare enough—the troops succeeded in finding or making their own amusements. Entertainers of various kinds would visit the front; and amongst the Territorials and New Armies there was an abundance of talent. Who does not recollect some memorable evening of this sort? And the estaminets all had their friendly gatherings. Numerous curious episodes could be told of that side of the soldier's life during this period.

The True Worth of Rations

Moreover, the British soldier managed to make good friends with the population of Picardy. Many were the festive evenings spent in billets; and the French would gladly accept the rations which the British Tommy or his officer might bring in to be put into the common pot. "It was reported that the civilians, unlike the poilus," writes General Spears, "knew how to accommodate themselves to our rations. In some localities at least, a private wishing to enjoy the favours of a young lady,

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front.* "The Somme."

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CHEERING HIS MAJESTY

Men of the 25th Infantry Brigade cheering King George V as, in company with Major-General Hudson, Commander of the 8th Division, he passed through the streets of Fouquereuil on August 11th, 1916. This village lies just behind Béthune, and King George visited it during his third trip to the Western Front, made between August 8th and August 15th, 1916. At this period the sector east of Béthune was a relatively quiet part of the line.

would hold up a tin of jam, and the formula, *Mademoiselle, confiture?* became well established. This is the only instance I have to record in which the difference of language, far from proving to be an impediment, tended on the contrary to closer, more rapid, and generally to more satisfactory relations, in fact to better liaison between French and English." [1]

In the meantime, the Germans on their side were growing uneasy. Their aeroplanes would show themselves more daringly over our trenches, and the ugly sausage-balloons were for ever going up. At times the enemy guns would also grow more active. In our front trenches the troops began to have a more harassing time. "What with uprooting trees and hedges, digging new trenches, advanced gun pits, and making trench-mortar emplacements, they were furnishing the enemy with ample evidence that an attack was in contemplation, and he 'strafed' the trenches accordingly." [1]

[1] Spears, *Liaison*, p. 69.

Advertising it to the World

The Germans were indeed prepared for us when the attack came—there was very little doubt of that. How could they help it, while assembly trenches and gun pits were being dug under their very noses, while we were advertising to the French and to the world in general that we shortly intended to take the offensive? The question was: had we sufficient weight of artillery and of men to break through their defences, on which they had now worked for a year-and-a-half, and behind which they had concentrated a formidable artillery? Many of our own people, not to mention the majority of the prisoners, considered the German positions virtually impregnable. Our optimists thought otherwise. The enemy's line had indeed grown most formidable—how formidable was never appreciated until we learnt by hard experience.

"Covered sunk forts, carefully placed mine fields, machine gun pits, gigantic quarries, enlarged in the chalk, connecting with systems of catacomb-like dug-outs and subterranean works at all depths, in which brigades could lie till the fitting moment. Belt upon belt of fifty-yard-deep wire protected these points, either directly or at such angles as should herd and hold up the attacking infantry to the fire of veiled guns. Nothing in the entire system had been neglected or unforeseen, except knowledge of the nature of the men who, in due time, should wear their red way through every yard of it." [1]

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front.*

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *The Irish Guards in the Great War*, p. 156.

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At long last, on the night of the 24th, the British bombardment opened. Such a marvellous display of fireworks flickered and flashed in the heavens that nearly every man was walking about in the small hours of the morning, watching the glowing sky and listening to the rumble, which resembled that of some supernatural thunderstorm.

"Let 'em have it!" they shouted. "Keep it up, boys!" They were laughing, almost dancing with joy, as they imagined the state to which the Germans were now being reduced. A few, with memories of Second Wipers, would relate their own suffering through those ghastly weeks. The novelty, however, slowly wore off, and many crept back to bed, if not to sleep. Others, as they sat on, grew more pensive, and a few finally remarked, "It makes me almost sorry for poor old Fritz!"

Diet of Cold Rations and Hope

At length all preparations were complete. Zero day was to be June 29th. Battalions billeted some distance away from the front began to take their places in the assembly trenches. Then, of a sudden, there came a postponement: nobody knew why. The bombardment slowed down, for the ammunition must now be spread thinner over the longer space of time. Men grew fidgety. Down in the trenches, the poor devils who had already taken their places for the attack were crowded together, living on cold tinned rations. But buoyed with the expectation of the great day, they endured it all with exemplary patience.

At last! a quiver of excitement went through the whole army; the consummation of eighteen months of devoted effort was at hand. On June 30th it was announced that "zero" hour was to be next day. "I watched the companies have their final tea," wrote a transport driver;[1] "I spoke to my friends again, took field-service postcards to post for them, watched them put their kit together. . . . Then I pictured the whole front where similar preparations were going on, the scores of units who would be tramping up . . . the tension of the batteries, the nervousness of the staff. Probably over 100,000 men would be over the top on the morrow, few of whom were likely to sleep a wink that night."

Let us follow our driver, an acute observer, for he could appreciate the inner meaning of those stupendous events. At first, as he reflected on the human hopes which centred on the morrow, he remained spell-bound. Sud-

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front.*

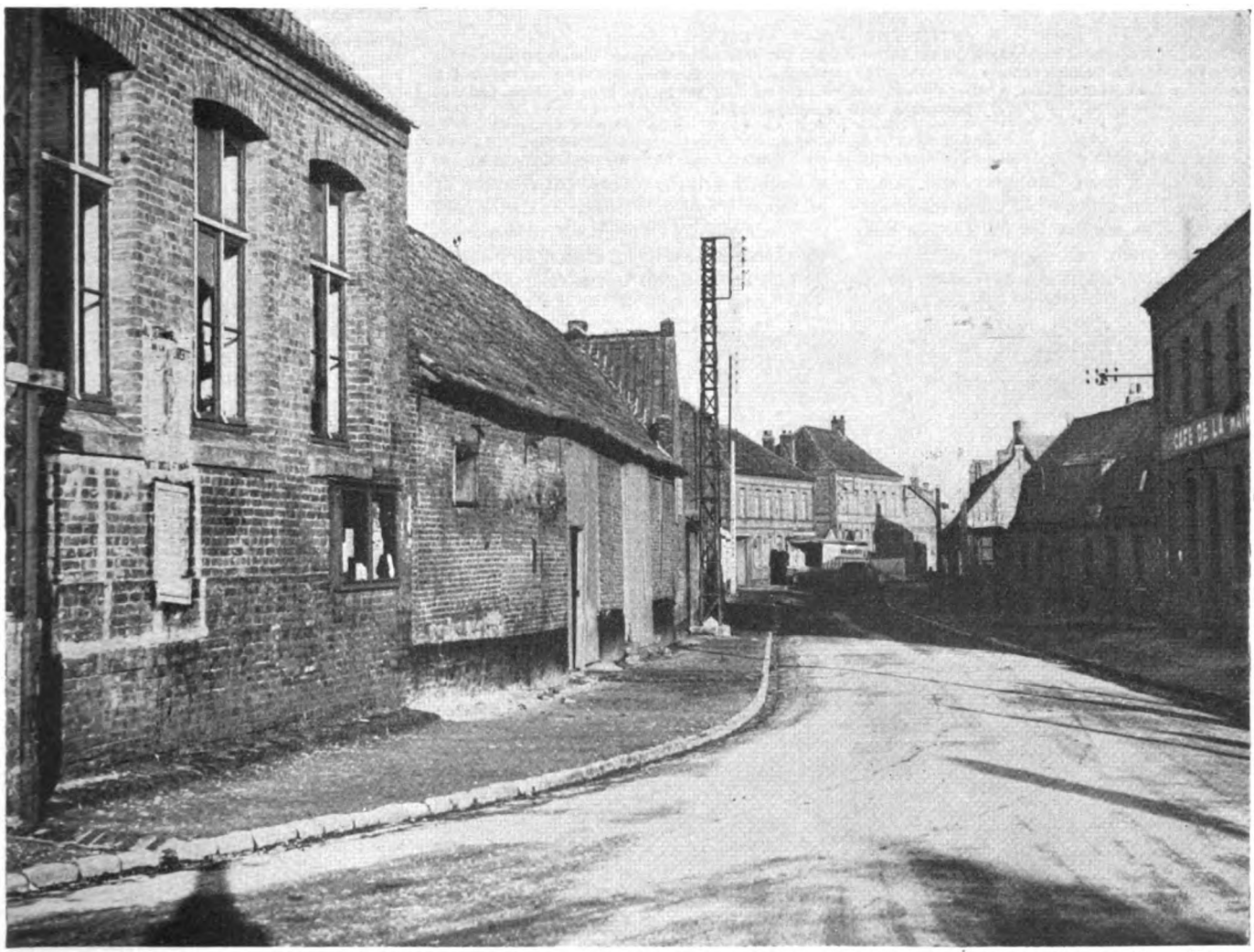

Photo: Keystone.

SILENT AND DESERTED

A photograph taken from the same point as its predecessor, and showing how Fouquereuil managed to escape serious bombardment, the line of houses being unchanged Twenty Years After. Being in such close proximity to popular Béthune, the village was well patronised as a billeting-spot—the 46th (North Midland) Division, in particular, spending three years in and about it and its sister village, Fouquières. The War cemetery of the latter is almost exclusively filled with 46th Division graves. At Fouquereuil there is no British cemetery, but a number of our War dead lie in the communal cemetery.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

AFTER THE GREAT ATTACK

Bringing in a wounded comrade of the 1st Bedfords, 5th Division, after the great opening attack of the First Battle of the Somme on July 1st, 1916. The photograph shows the men about to cross the sunken road near Beaumont-Hamel, a village which was reached on July 1st by the 29th Division, but was not taken until November 13th.

denly his dream dissolved. He saw and heard once more laughter and songs echoing from one end of the front to the other. The companies fell in, the men carrying their full fighting-kit ; great-coats left behind, it is true, but 66 lb. on every man—and a few carried even more; enough, anyhow, to prevent running or clambering out of a trench or shell-hole !

Never mind ! The bombardment, so vast, so awe-inspiring, stilled all doubts. Troops filed out on to the roads, passing between rows of reserves, gunners, medical and supply men—all whose duty it was to stay further back. Jokes and banter flew around ; the onlookers called out messages of good cheer. Off they went, a few looking straight before them, features tense and hard, but the majority of faces wreathed in smiles—for a vision of victory was in their souls.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

MACHINE-GUNNERS

Wearing gas-helmets, British machine-gunners do their share in the Somme fighting near Ovillers, July, 1916. From the German point of view especially, the long struggle on the Somme was a machine-gunner's campaign ; and it was the gallantry, stubbornness, and enterprise of the enemy machine-gun crews which helped, more than any other factor in the conflict, to bring about our failure.

Awestricken and Silent

Slowly the endless columns trickled away into the distance, toward the front. As they grew nearer to it, silence gripped the ranks, but hearts beat high. The onlookers, left behind, one by one crept back pensively to their jobs, awe-stricken by the greatness of coming events. They, too, slept little that night ; but dreaming of shells and din of battle, they dozed off at last, and so missed the early dawn. . . .

Waking with a start, and straining their ears, they were surprised to hear a bird singing here and there, an aeroplane overhead, a picket being driven into the ground. A lovely summer's day, absolutely still, peaceful, serene. Could it be another postponement, another false rumour ?

No ; suddenly there came a crash of sound. " Boom ! " thundered the heavy gun to the right. " Bang ! " went the big howitzer on the left. " R-r-o-u-m-m ! " roared the neighbouring battery in rear. The tumult grew in volume. The distant siege-guns, those huge 9·2's, a mass of field batteries ; they were all at it for the final act. The artillery chaos was like an orchestra playing at a climax, when all the instruments merge into one great volume of sound. " The continuous throbbing and concussion caused a curious sensation of pressure about the ears, the earth seemed to be shaking beneath ; even the ants must have had headaches." [1]

" Give 'em hell, boys ! " said one man.

" If we don't get through this time, well, we blinking well ought to ! " said another.

All along the front those left in the rear stood agog, some speechless, others wildly enthusiastic. They straggled off to their jobs ; none could eat. All were athirst for news, fretting in their inactivity. What man could devote himself to his task with the din of battle calling out yonder ? Morning slid into afternoon—no news ! Then rumours wild and plentiful—" they are through ! " — " Cambrai taken ! " — " prisoners uncountable ! " Evening dragged on. Rumours grew, but be-

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front.*

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came less optimistic. Night fell. At last some stragglers came in; it was 1 a.m. Sleepless ears heard a murmur; all rushed out. They caught the words " . . . failure. Back where we started ! "

The Leaden Answer

" What ! " they all shouted; then the words froze on their lips. Silence.

" Hell it was ! Back where we started. They're nearly all gone ! " came the leaden reply, like a bullet that goes home.

Incredible ! Agonised questions and oaths raked the informant. Silence again. They were dumb. Visions of Neuve Chapelle. Another Loos. Even worse, since they were back at the starting line. And after all those months of preparation ! The years of hope ! The bottom seemed to fall out of their world; the gates of Fate, grim, blood-stained, merciless, seemed to open wide, beyond a vision of unending blood and slaughter. Give in ? NO—NO—NO —rather years of it.

Then a stab of pain. The battalion ! The battalion ! What of the pals who had gone out ! The few who had been spared from Loos, Second Wipers !

" For God's sake," whispered one, " where's old Bill Tomkins ? " " And the Growler ? " almost blubbered another. Silence again. Soon a sound of feet. A party of walking wounded, with others coming for bombs and ammunition, went by; a lantern just revealed a grim look on the faces of men who had been through the furnace—just as it had been after Second Wipers ! But, great heavens above ! they had only been there for a day. Dirty, muddy, ragged; some bloodstained, lacerated, and with torn clothing—oh, that wire !

With the coming of the wounded and of stretcher-bearers, drivers of ammunition carts, and supply columns, tongues were unloosed. Failure indeed it had been, and at what a cost ! But after the first shock of disillusionment, the temper of the troops hardened. " We've got to see it through ! " they thought rather than spoke. The sounds of joking and of light-heartedness were gone. The coming of the more seriously wounded set the last doubts at rest.

After the First Line—the Second

The days began to go by. The first shock of the terrible reality began to fade away; the first pangs were numbed. Even away to the south, where things had gone better, the fierce struggle which followed the early success of those lucky divisions on the British right brought about, in the end, a similar disillusionment. For even where the first German position had been carried, there remained the second to be faced; and that was proving as great a task as the first.

At the northern end of the front, where London Territorials and the Ulstermen had fought so well and made such brilliant but, alas ! fleeting head-

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

MAKING FOR COMFORT

A party of " walking cases," including one German, making its way to a dressing-station near Bernafay Wood after the Battle of Bazentin Ridge : a photograph dated July 19th, 1916. The two villages named respectively Bazentin-le-Grand and Bazentin-le-Petit had both been captured on July 14th ; Bernafay Wood had been taken on the 4th.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

GUNNERS DINING

An elegant dining-saloon, peopled by artillery sergeants, in Mametz Wood on a day in July, 1916. In the background several Red Cross men refresh themselves near a water-waggon. On the subject of supplies, it is interesting to compare the ration-strength of our armies in 1914 with that in 1918. In the former year the approximate monthly issue of food totalled 8,100,000 lb. ; by 1918 it had risen to 157,500,000 lb.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WAR COMES TO BIEFVILLERS

Biefvillers-lez-Bapaume, to give it its full and correct designation, is situated 2½ km. north-west of Bapaume, on the winding road which leads up to Achiet-le-Grand. Although small, it was of some strategical importance, being at a crossing of minor roads, and close to the railway. The British took Bapaume and neighbouring villages in March, 1917, but lost them during the enemy offensive—the Second Battle of the Somme—exactly a year later. The above photograph shows a German mortar and shells at Biefvillers after the ultimate recapture of it during our final advance.

way into the German line, men consoled themselves with the thought—"We've done our bit; the chaps down south have gained by what we have lost." But such self-effacing stoicism was not proof against the wearing effect which many suffered too, in their turn, when they were called south.

To those who were not summoned to continue the struggle on the right, there came rumours of the carnage at Delville Wood, High Wood, Guillemont, Les-bœufs. First-hand acquaintance with the terrible conditions of the battlefield, and the fearful price at which any advance was being made, became a reality when they were also asked to take Thiepval.

For two whole months the terrible slogging-match went on. The Germans themselves spoke of it with awe; their letters to the Fatherland contained terrified references to "the blood-bath of the Somme." By sheer courage and sheer endurance alone the New Armies continued to face the fearful ordeal. Their spirit never gave in. Disappointed they were, but neither soured nor discouraged.

Nevertheless, as the days and the weeks went by, it grew clearer and clearer that the temper of the Army was changing. That first day of July had been, as it were, a watershed. Up the one side those New Armies had struggled laboriously, borne onward and upward by an exaltation and idealistic resolution which had rested on visions of speedy victory, a triumph of justice over wrong. Slowly they had toiled to the very last ridge of that crest. Progress had been arduous and sometimes even painful; after all, many of those men of the New Armies would, only two years before, have been unwilling to kill a fly, still less to strike an enemy. Yet here they now stood on the battlefield intent on slaughter, and trusting in the success of savage armed force.

When the Vision Melted

So they faced the grim reality of war in its most brutal form, unshaken, if

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Photo : Keystone.

THE ROAD INTO BIEFVILLERS

The village was recaptured by the 37th Division, assisted by New Zealand troops of the New Zealand Division, on August 24th, 1918—the date which also saw the New Zealanders capture Grévillers, a little way to the south, where the memorial to their missing now stands. This part of the Third Battle of the Somme is that known more generally as the Battle of Bapaume (August 21st—31st, 1918). The capture of Biefvillers helped to pave the way for that of Bapaume itself on August 29th.

deeply moved. This they did all with the ardent conviction which had made them into soldiers. And when they reached that crest, and the vision melted and gave way to the grim sight of battle, their idealism wilted ; the more primitive instincts asserted themselves ; of a sudden all the seamy sides of war stood revealed. " Well, so be it ! It's got to be done." They accepted their fate ; the tenacity of the British temperament came to their aid. They went on, resolved, if need be, to drink the foul draught to the very dregs.

But criticism, acrid and sometimes even hostile, was heard. The failure of the first day on the Somme was thrown into the teeth of the higher command—so often thoughtlessly, and not infrequently unjustly. In the howling which was now audible against the professionals who stood at the head of the Army, the accusation of incompetence grew louder.

Haig Alone Immune

Only Sir Douglas Haig remained immune to all such recriminations. Perhaps because he was the incarnation of the British soldier's temperament, or because his personality reigned supreme in the Army, or because it was felt that there was no other to take his place, Douglas Haig stood firmly established in the esteem of his men—to the very end of the War.

So the Army faced the War anew, " but with another heart, and with what other eyes."[1] Yet to their everlasting credit, all the historic qualities of the British soldier, patience and endurance, never failed them right down to the Armistice.

But in order to understand the full meaning of " the Somme," it is necessary first to study, in such detail as the scope of this work allows, the main course of the battles which are grouped under that one title.

[1] Tennyson, *Tithonus*.

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CHAPTER XLVI

THE SOMME: THE BATTLE

In this, the second chapter dealing with the Somme Battle, we follow the course of the operations. After the opening days the fighting ceased to be a grand concerted attack on a wide front. Instead, week after week witnessed localised combats in which the objectives were found mainly in the woods, small hills, and villages of the valley. Rarely a day passed unmarked by some feat of arms, now proudly recalled in many a regimental and divisional history. Here, on the Somme, the civilian soldiers proved their worth, and on the Colours of practically every regiment in the British Army their deeds are commemorated.

As has been narrated, by the beginning of 1916 it had been decided by the British and French Governments, with the full concurrence of their respective military advisers, to prepare a joint attack against the German front in France. It was to take place that summer, and the locality selected for the great enterprise was Picardy, the high, chalk, downland region which extends mainly on the northern side of the basin of the River Somme.

A Region of Strong Defences

The selection of this area clearly entailed disadvantages. It was known that at this point the German entrenchments were at their strongest; the countryside, moreover, was dotted with strongly-built villages and farms, also with thick woods and coppices—all good points for defence. An attack launched eastwards along that front would not in itself contain any essential strategic menace against the German communications: as was shown by the retreat to the Hindenburg Line in 1917. The Flanders sector would have suited the British better, since success in that quarter would have eased the enemy's pressure on the Channel ports, and even, possibly, freed the Belgian coast-line.

But the French authorities, and above all General Joffre, were adamant: the offensive must take place on the Somme, and nowhere else. The main reason for this determination plainly was Joffre's stubborn desire that the coming onslaught should be a joint affair: it was on the Somme itself that the two armies met; therefore the attack must be centred on that front.

Then, in February, 1916, came the German offensive against Verdun. This greatly disturbed the Allied plans, while under the prolonged strain the condition of the French troops gradually deteriorated. More than half the French Army finally went through the mill. As the summer approached, so did the struggle around Verdun become more obstinate and costly, and more and more exhausting to the French resources in munitions and reinforcements. Consequently, the French demands that the British should move, and that soon, became more insistent. Once more Sir Douglas Haig suggested that it would suit him far better to attack farther north. He also wished for delay, in order to give the New Armies longer time to shake down and to complete their training.

Then, also, the Tanks, the great British surprise of the War, were actually in preparation. Were they not worth waiting for? But no: as time passed, the crisis of Verdun grew more acute; and with it French insistence became more urgent. In the end Sir Douglas Haig, with the British Government behind him, loyally stood by the pledges given to France. The battles of the Somme were to be fought as planned.

Joffre's "Attrition" Scheme

There is now no doubt that General Joffre, long before the German onslaught against Verdun, had evolved in

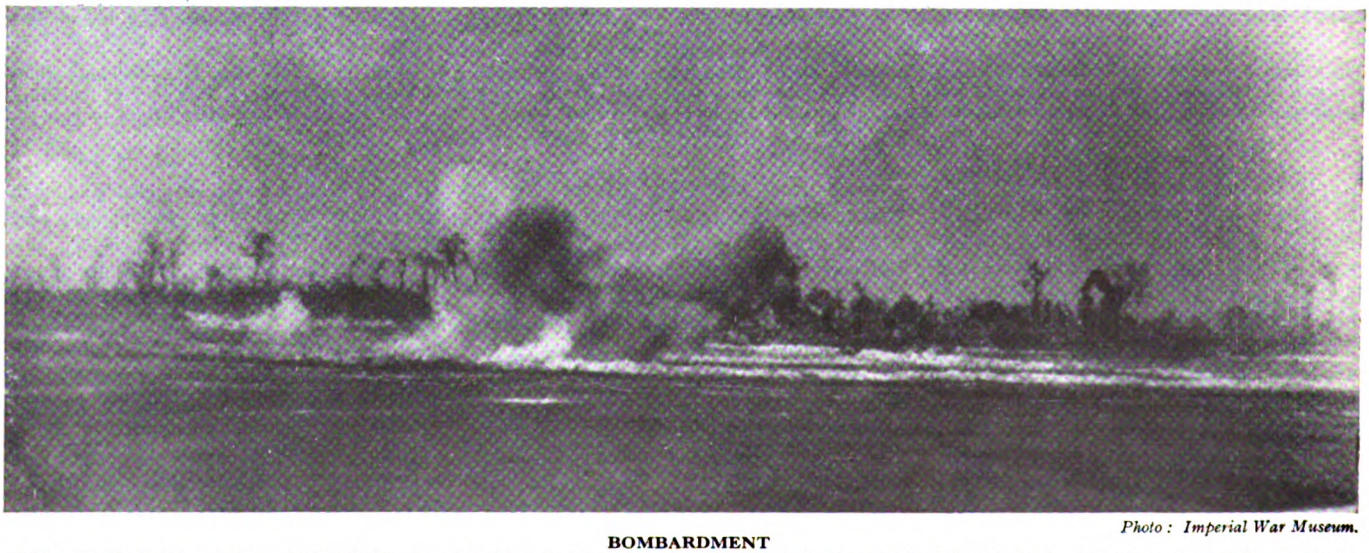

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BOMBARDMENT

British artillery engaged in bombarding the German trenches prior to the attack on Beaumont-Hamel, July 1st, 1916. The inadequacy of the preliminary bombardment on the whole Somme front—an inadequacy due partly to lack of quantity in munitions, partly to lack of quality in them, and partly to the unforseen "spread-over" which at the last moment necessitated prolonging the bombardment beyond the stipulated period—is fully dealt with in the accompanying chapters, where tribute is paid also to the courage of our gunners.

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his own mind not a strategic success on the Somme, but merely a "war of attrition" which must be carried on mainly by France's allies, England, Russia, and even Italy.[1] He thus virtually gave up the idea of a great breakthrough, and laid stress only on the *combat d'usure*, the wearing-down battle, into which the Somme fighting, of evil memory, soon degenerated—the "blood bath of the Somme" of which every German soldier came to speak or write with feelings of awe and dread.

But by the irony of Fate, it was Verdun that first dragged the French Army into that remorseless, grinding warfare which was to claim a fearful toll of life from France and Germany alike; it was at Verdun that the first steps were taken—by the Germans—to grind down the French reserves; and it was France who first paid the cost of that process.

Be that as it may, the repercussions of Verdun on the plans for the Somme were considerable. Little by little the promised French share in the great attack dwindled. From 50, 40, 30 divisions, the eventual French contribution diminished until on July 1st it amounted to no more than 11 divisions, with 2 more in reserve. This was the French Sixth Army, commanded by General Foch. Fortunately, France made a noteworthy contribution in heavy artillery to the common cause.

It is a strange fact, too, that the Verdun battle should have infused the French higher authorities with a growing sense of optimism with regard to the coming Somme offensive. This optimism, radiating from General Joffre to Foch, seemed to become so contagious, that it infected the headquarters of the British Army. After all, the weather was fine; Picardy at the time seemed dry; the ground offered "good going," as yet uncut by battle. And did not the rolling chalk downs seem to afford ideal observing-stations for the huge mass of artillery which was assembling in rear of the British Fourth Army? Would it not be good country for the cavalry pursuit which was to be the climax of a great victory on the Somme?

Army and Nation in the Throes

Accordingly, throughout the Spring and early summer, the entire British military machine was being directed towards the great battlefield, where the first attack should begin round about July 1st; and behind the Army the military resources of the whole nation were made to converge towards that focus. For six months Army and nation alike toiled at training the men and producing the munitions necessary to stage the great drama. Some description of this colossal effort has already been given.

[1] Poincaré, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 309.

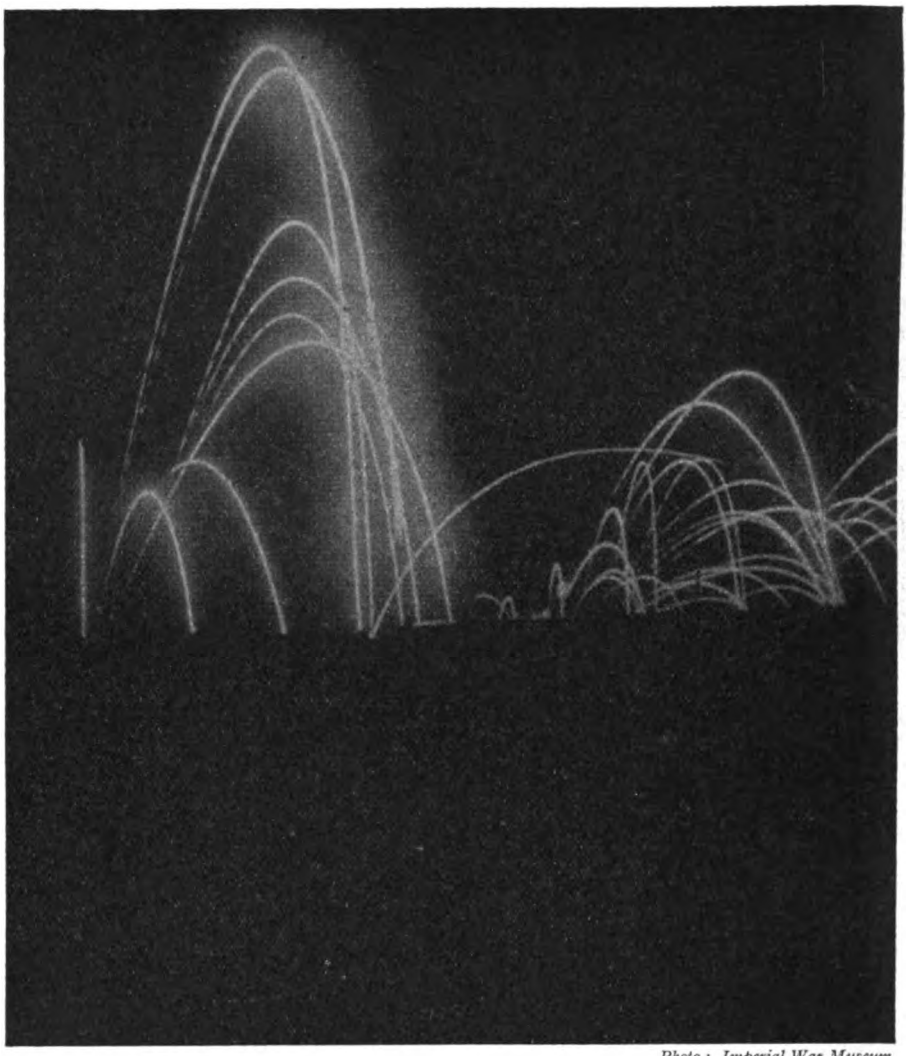

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FIREWORKS

This is not a photograph taken at the late lamented Crystal Palace, but a night scene during the opening days of the Somme fighting in the Beaumont-Hamel area. The village lay before the right wing of our VIII Corps: the 29th Division, of Gallipoli fame, which faced it, having the 4th Division on its left, and the 36th Division, of the X Corps, on its right. The German force opposing our 29th Division, and holding Beaumont-Hamel, was the *119th Reserve Regiment*, consisting of Württemberg troops.

But it was not fated that the curtain should rise on the opening scene without difficulty and delay. On June 11th General Joffre requested that zero day, first fixed for July 1st, should be advanced to June 25th, the wire-cutting bombardment to begin on the 20th. After much discussion and tedious alteration of time-tables, the date was fixed for the 29th. Twice again General Foch asked for a postponement, but in vain.

The hour of attack also gave rise to difference of opinion: the French wished it to be 9 a.m.; General Rawlinson, commanding the Fourth Army, proposed 7 a.m.; as a compromise, it was fixed for 7.30 a.m. Many commanders urged that the attack should be made at the first streak of dawn, and General Rawlinson had concurred. But the French desire for full daylight, in order to allow the artillery to observe its final bombardment, was allowed to prevail. And such was the confidence universally felt at all British headquarters in the efficacy of the gun-fire that the later hour was adopted.

At the last moment the French once more urgently pressed for a fresh postponement to July 1st. This was reluctantly granted by Sir Douglas Haig, although by so doing the British bombardment, which had already begun, had to be "watered down" to compensate for the extra two days over which it was to be extended.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A 6-INCH GUN FIRING

This weapon belongs to the category of heavy guns, ranking next in order above the 60-pounder. Apart from howitzers and two solitary giant guns, the 6-inch was the heaviest armament in use on the Fourth Army front for the preliminary bombardment. Only 24 6-inch guns were available for the five corps of the Army, and the supply of ammunition for them was correspondingly small.

7.30 a.m., July 1st, 1916

At length, on July 1st at 7.30 a.m., the assault was set in motion. The British infantry, consisting almost entirely of civilian soldiers, stepped over their parapets on the great venture. "No braver or more determined men ever faced an enemy than those sons of the British Empire who 'went over the top' on the 1st July 1916. Never before had the ranks of a British Army on the field of battle contained the finest of all classes of the nation in physique, brains, and education. And they were volunteers, not conscripts. If ever a decisive victory was to be won, it was to be expected now." [1]

Nevertheless, it was a fearsome task which faced the British. For eighteen months the Germans had been constructing a veritable fortress across the plain of Picardy; and no hostile movement had come to interrupt their work. Fully expecting an attack, they were uncertain only as to where the main impact would fall.

The French, so they imagined, had been too severely mauled at Verdun to participate in the assault; hence they might be ruled out of the reckoning. The farther away from the French, they argued, the more likelihood there was of attack. Hence the strength of the defence over against the northern portion of the British attack; hence also the comparative ease with which the French could penetrate the German lines farther to the south; and also the relatively less formidable opposition that the British troops adjacent to the French encountered.

Before going further, it is desirable to give a brief synopsis of the next fifteen weeks' struggle. The actual Somme battles fall into four distinct periods, which are:

1. The opening phase, which began on July 1st and continued on the British right for several days.

2. Then the second phase, which opened with the great dawn attack of July 14th, and lasted with unabated ferocity until the close of August. The German resistance was of the most stubborn, and progress was at first almost wholly limited to the right wing, where it grew very slow and costly in life. The fighting in the centre was even more severe.

3. The third phase was planned to stage the first Tank-attack on September 15th, and was more rapid, if again costly in life. Then in October the weather broke, and the battlefield under the torrential rain was converted into a bloodstained morass.

4. The fourth and last phase was a slight consolidation of the gains hitherto made on the right, whilst the left wing of the attack carried the severely contested German line northwards of Thiepval. It opened on November 13th, and was very brief.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ATTACKING NEAR MAMETZ

The British troops in the photograph require some finding, but are to be seen as small black dots on and in front of the furthermost band of white. These bands represent, of course, the chalky matter excavated in trench-making, and mark the lay-out of the trenches. Mametz was captured by us on July 1st, but its notorious wood was not secured until nearly a fortnight later.

[1] *Official History*, 1916, i, p. 315.

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WEST OF PÉRONNE

Then and Now

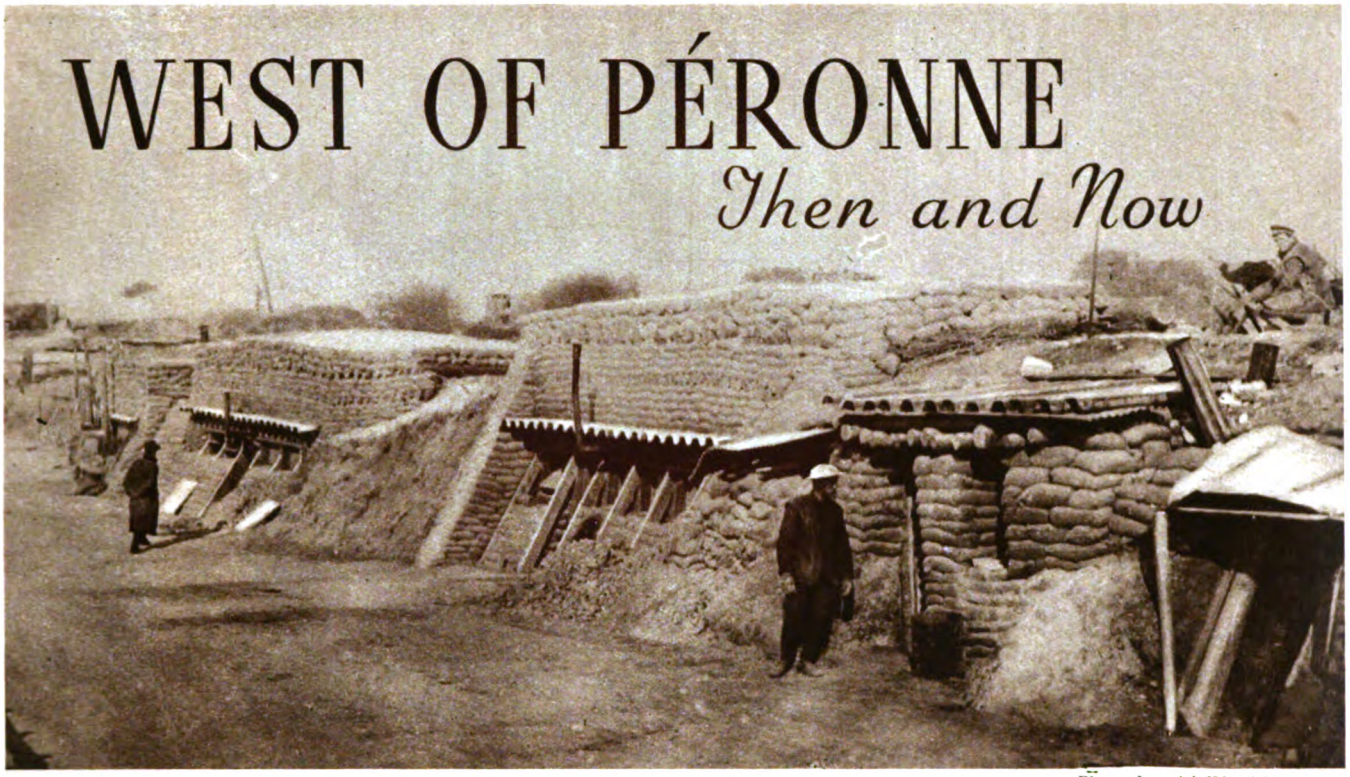

Photo: Imperial War Museum

ORDERLY BUT OMINOUS

A village on the south bank of the Somme, Feuillères lies opposite Hem, and 7 km. west-north-west of Péronne. Although it witnessed its share of grimness long before our final advance, it was not until August, 1918, that it was carried wholly into the stream of battle history. Then, on the night of August 30th, the 5th Australian Infantry Brigade was here passed across the Somme on hastily-constructed bridges, floods and heavy machine-gun fire having prevented its crossing elsewhere. Above is a " street " of sandbag dug-outs at Feuillères.

Photo: Keystone

UGLY BUT UNHARRASSED

August 31st, 1918, saw the German positions round Feuillères turned from the north-west with complete success. The enemy had intended to make a determined stand on the river-bank hereabouts, and it was due to the dash and determination of the 5th Australian Brigade that they failed. As a direct consequence of the fall of Feuillères, Australian troops were able to capture Péronne on September 1st. Earlier in the War, the French had taken Feuillères, in the First Battle of the Somme, on July 3rd, 1916.

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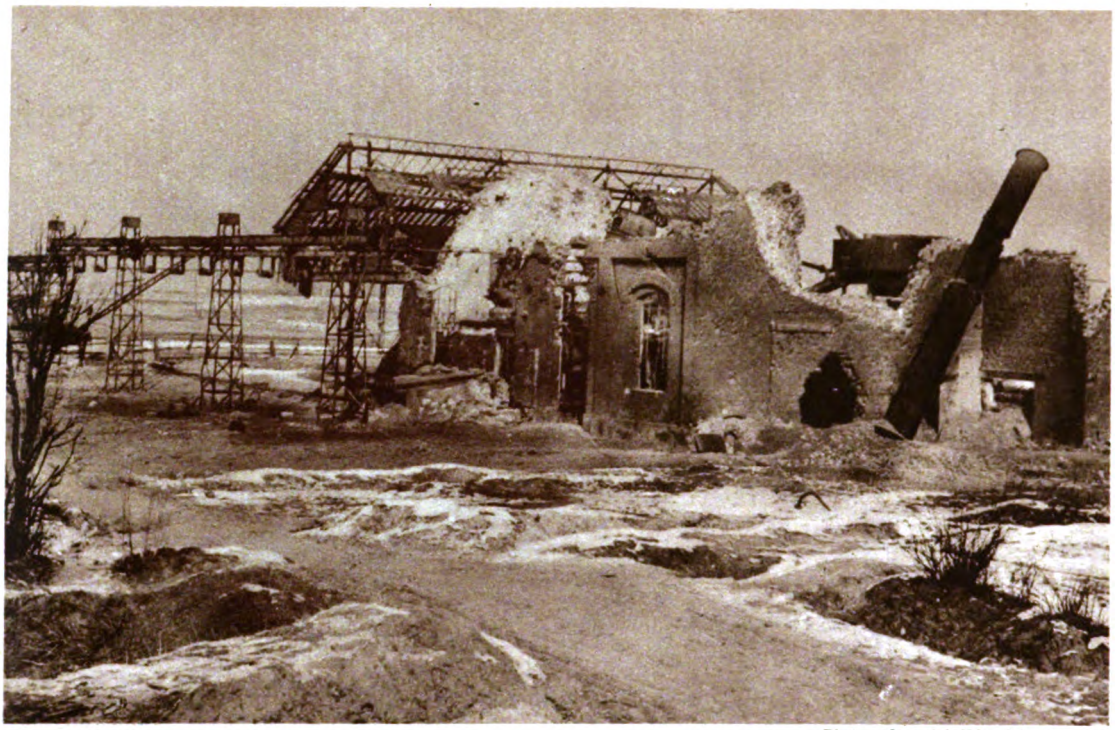

Photo : Imperial War Museum

SHELLS AMID THE SUGAR

They were stirring times for this sugar-refinery at Frise when shells began to batter it to pieces. The village, which lies on the Somme Canal where the latter, some 3 km. west of Feuillères, cuts across the neck of a deep horseshoe loop in the river, was on the French front during the First Battle of the Somme. This front covered 8 miles, as opposed to the 20 miles of British front further north. The French took Frise on the second day's fighting—July 2nd, 1916.

Photo: Keystone

IN COMMISSION ONCE MORE

A contemporary photograph of Frise sugar-refinery as now rebuilt, and once more at work. This small village had suffered several vicissitudes prior to its capture in July, 1916. Its French garrison had lost it on January 28th of that year, during a time of much fighting in this region, but had been within an ace of regaining it on February 11th. The recapture on July 2nd went in company with that of Curlu and Herbécourt: Dompierre, Bequincourt, Bussu, and Fay having been taken by our Allies the previous day.

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CHURCT

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FRISE: THE NE E-I
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oto: Imperial War Museum

FRISE

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Photo: Keystone

-LIKE NEW SPIRE

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A GERMAN STRONG-POINT

Cléry-sur-Somme lies on the north side of the river 5 km. north-west of Péronne, and is on the main Péronne–Maricourt–Albert road. It figured with unenviable distinction in the Somme fighting of 1916, remaining in German hands until the first week of September, although the French, its eventual captors, had made progress in the vicinity as early as August 21st. The date of capture was September 5th. This photograph shows a German strong-point east of the village.

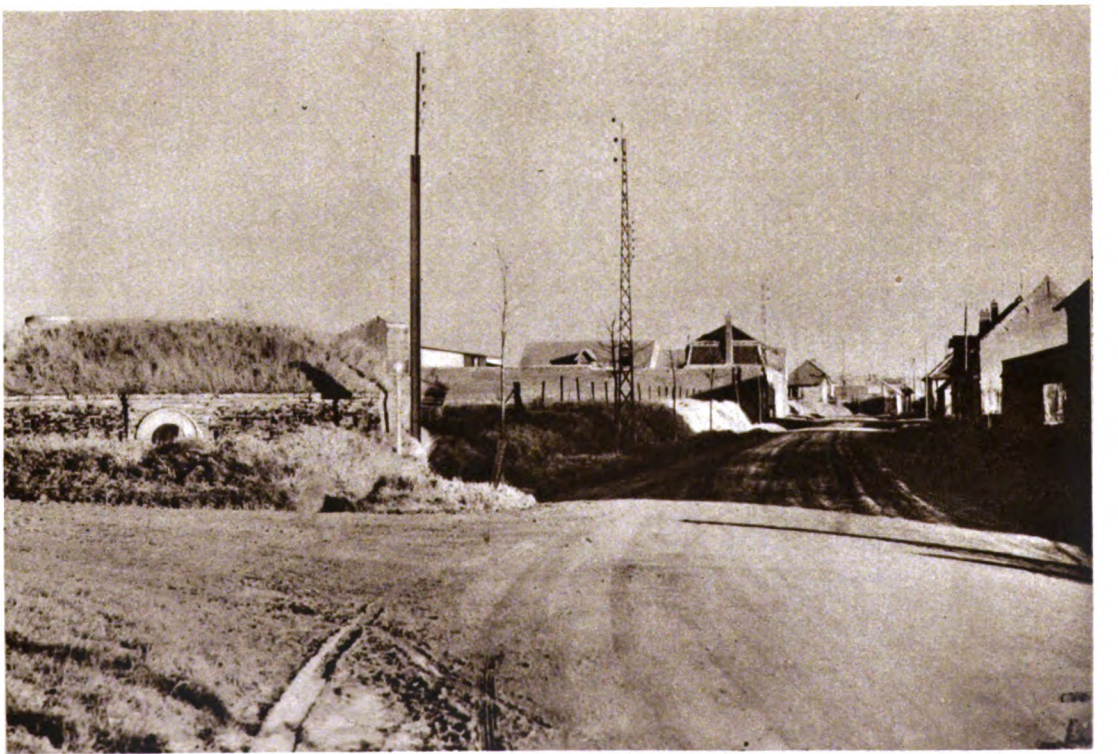

Photo: Keystone

A FRENCH CROSS-ROADS

The story of Cléry-sur-Somme in 1918 forms, in a manner of speaking, a sequel to that of Feuillères; for, after being lost to the Germans on March 24th, the village was the scene of 5th Australian Infantry Brigade activity during our August counter-advance. After capturing Feuillères, this brigade went on to storm enemy trenches east of Cléry, which it used as assembly-positions for the assault on Mont St. Quentin—the hill-fortress guarding Péronne. This photograph shows a street-corner in the rebuilt village.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

AMONG THE CAPTURED AT CAPPY

Cappy, on the south bank of the Somme, is the westernmost of the four villages illustrated in this section, since it lies barely 3 km. south-east of Bray, and fully 13 km. west of Péronne. During the First Battle of the Somme Cappy was some way behind the line, and lay just within French territory, the Anglo-French boundary passing through Bray. In our final advance the village was taken by the Australians on August 26th (1918), and this photograph shows "diggers" with German prisoners, natives of Lorraine, working in the grounds of the newly-established Australian hospital a few days later.

Photo: Keystone

PANORAMA OF CAPPY TO-DAY

Modern Cappy, unlike many a village in the Somme country, is picturesque and well-wooded—a fortunate condition no doubt due in large measure to the comparatively light bombardment suffered here (observe the roofs in the 1918 view). The place is situated at the point where the Bray–Péronne high-road crosses over the Somme, and forks away from a secondary route leading southward to Fay and Ablaincourt.

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The First Phase

The first period may be summed up as follows. On July 1st, at 7.30 a.m., the Fourth Army attacked the German lines with all its five army corps. "Under a cloudless blue sky which gave full promise of the hot midsummer day ahead, wave after wave of British infantry rose, with bayonets glistening, moved forward into a blanket of smoke and mist as the barrage lifted from the enemy's front trench." [1]

The success of the attack depended on two conditions: first, that the German wire should have been adequately cut; second, that the bombardment should have so pulverised the front line that the infantry would readily pass over it. During the night, patrols were sent out to inspect the wire. On the right, in front of XIII and XV Corps, it would appear to have been more or less satisfactorily disposed of. Farther to the left, the cutting, at least in places, left very much to be desired.

In front of Thiepval and Gommecourt the wire was all but intact. Elsewhere there were only gaps; the 8th Division reported it as "not properly cut"; two battalions of the 31st Division stated that on their front it was undamaged; other reports varied. The question as to the state of the garrison of the enemy front line would be answered only by the test of attack; in the meantime raiding parties' reports were not altogether encouraging.

[1] *Official History*, 1916, i.

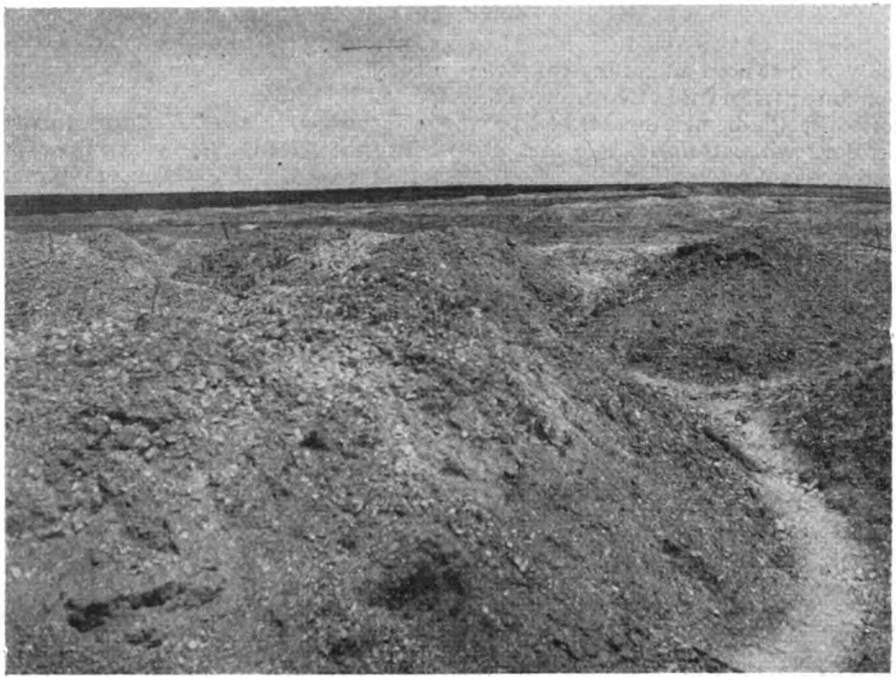

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE REMNANTS OF A TRENCH

Demonstrating what a successful bombardment can do in the way of demolition, this photograph shows one of the Somme trenches captured from the Germans, in a sector where the artillery had found its mark. A bare gully between two featureless banks of rubble is all that remains of what had probably once been part of an elaborate trench system.

As the leading wave approached the German trenches, all doubts were soon set at rest. The wire had not everywhere been cut; gaps led to "bunching" of the troops, with subsequent disastrous results. The German front line, though very severely damaged, particularly on the right, had been provided with such deep dug-outs, lifts for machine guns, and other devices, that its garrison had been able to endure the bombardment whilst keeping its defensive-power unimpaired over the greater part of the front.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NOT QUITE SO BAD

Another captured German trench, this time not quite so badly damaged by artillery, since at least there are a few dug-outs which have remained recognisable. The situation is close to Ovillers—through which the German line ran prior to the battle—with the Albert—Bapaume road in the background. Ovillers was taken by the 48th Division on July 17th.

Gallantry and Fearful Losses

The breadth of No Man's Land, greater on the left, rendered the task of the attack more difficult. Weighed down with their heavy loads, with bayonets fixed and carried aloft, spread out in long waves, the New Army divisions were suddenly assailed by a hail of machine-gun fire which shattered their attack—all except on the right wing. But in spite of the fearful losses to which they were subjected, the gallant fellows pressed on, and made supreme efforts to pierce the German front.

On the right the attack could, on the whole, be regarded as successful. The XIII Corps, and to a slightly lesser degree the XV Corps, bit deep into the German front. On the extreme right of the 30th Division, Lieut.-Colonel Fairfax of the 17th King's, and Commandant Le Petit of the 3rd Battalion, 153rd Regiment, of the French Army,

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led the advance arm-in-arm at the point of junction of the Allied forces. Here the wire had been admirably cut; the German garrison in the front line, cowed by the bombardment, had been six days without food. The first objective was quickly taken.

The 18th Division did almost as well, and carried the Pommiers Redoubt, though not without hard fighting. The 30th Division swept on and seized Montauban village. The 18th Division followed up its first success in similar manner. By nightfall the XIII Corps was well up the formidable ridge, with all its objectives gained. In fact, it could have gone on much farther: unfortunately it was kept back.

To the right of the British XIII Corps, the French Sixth Army had also made a deep inroad into the German position, reaching Hardecourt and Curlu. Against a far weaker resistance, the French attack proved highly successful; it had also been ably conducted, and even more strongly supported by artillery.

Meanwhile, in the XV Corps, to the left of the XIII Corps, the 7th Division forced an entry into Mametz village, whilst the 21st Division managed to progress as far as the "Sunken Road." This double success was marred by the failure to make good the village of Fricourt, which now stood out as a bastion between these two divisions. Nevertheless, on either flank the advance continued; more ground was gained, although Fricourt was still holding out at nightfall.

At La Boisselle and Ovillers

In the III Corps, the 34th Division set out to attack the strong salient of La Boisselle, a most difficult task. The division essayed to take it by "pinching out" methods; but from the very first things began to go astray, until, in the end, despite the fiercest fighting, the British were left with but two insignificant and precarious footings in the German line. The enemy had gained full information of the impending assault and was found ready. Having been admirably trained in the task of swiftly manning their parapets, the Germans emerged and mowed down the luckless 34th, which, to make matters worse, had quitted its trenches simultaneously. Consequently, when the leading wave faltered under the German fire, the rear lines were telescoped into the falling ranks ahead.

Meanwhile the 8th Division had set out to capture the Ovillers spur. This attack failed utterly, although the behaviour of the men, who saw themselves doomed, remained a brilliant example to the Army. By 9.30 a.m. the

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE CHÂTEAU DE GOMMECOURT

Gommecourt, 15 km. due north of Albert, and lying between Fonquevillers and Hébuterne, is perhaps most notable in that here, all through 1915 and early 1916, the line executed a sharp change of direction to the north-east, running up round Arras northward to La Bassée. The resultant bend was known as the Gommecourt salient, and in the scheme for the First Battle of the Somme an attack was planned to be made on July 1st on both sides of the salient, with a view to pinning down the enemy's troops. Despite heavy opposition, this attack succeeded in its aim, although Gommecourt itself was taken but not held.

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Photo: Keystone.

NOW A PLEASANT COUNTRY MANSION

Having been retained on the all-important July 1st, 1916, Gommecourt was kept in German hands until the following February, when, on the 27th, it was evacuated in the retirement to the Hindenburg Line. As regards our attack in 1916, it may be noted that although the first Somme battle was predominantly a Fourth Army affair, Gommecourt lay opposite the VII or southernmost corps of the Third Army. To the R.F.C. this village was a turning-point in many a "line patrol"—its identification being made easy by the presence on its eastern side of the Bois du Biez, an almost geometrically-exact equilateral triangle.

attack was over. Even then the division was ready to try again, and a second attempt was planned to be staged at 5 p.m. Fortunately, wiser counsels prevailed.

The X Corps was confronted with the hardest task of all; for its main objective was Thiepval, perhaps the most redoubtable of the German fortified villages. Every cellar in Thiepval had been converted into a bombproof shelter; a whole series of cleverly-designed works had converted the place into a veritable fortress. The 32nd and 36th Divisions started the attack, whereupon the German machine guns opened on the leading waves, "as if there never had been any bombardment."

On the right, the 32nd struggled on gamely, and actually secured the "Leipzig Redoubt," a work on the front line to the south of Thiepval. The 36th Division, in most gallant manner, succeeded in reaching the "Schwaben Redoubt," to the north of the village, high up on the Thiepval spur itself. But the result of these dearly-bought successes, on either flank of the village proved a source of confusion and certain failure.

Reserves Powerless to Help

The 36th Division, by dint of heroic efforts, maintained its hold on the "Schwaben Redoubt" until nightfall, when sheer necessity drove the survivors back to their starting-point. By this time a final attempt made by the reserve division, the 49th, to save the situation, could do nought but fail. "Leipzig Redoubt," on the other hand—a far less important gain—was held.

To the north of the River Ancre, the VIII Corps also had been set a hard task, since the German position was extremely strong; the village of Beaumont-Hamel, like Thiepval, had been converted into a perfect fortress. The 29th Division's attack was heralded by the explosion of a mine under the German trenches; unfortunately it was fired ten minutes before the attack, and so surprise became impossible.

As a further set-back to the VIII Corps, the Germans were successful in opening a surprise bombardment on the attack from no less than sixty-six batteries, whose existence had hitherto been unsuspected. By 10 a.m. the 29th Division, although hardened by war experience and fresh from Gallipoli, was brought back to its own trenches, after suffering fearful loss. Amidst the outstanding bravery of its three brigades it would not be invidious to refer to the exceptionally fine effort made by the 1st Newfoundland Battalion. Alone, when all around them had failed, the Newfoundlanders deliberately went forward

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

THE BAYS IN THE WOOD

Queen's Bays on the march, seen entering all that remained by September 18th, 1916, of Hardecourt Wood. Hardecourt lies due south of Guillemont, and about an equal distance due north of the riverside village of Curlu. Prior to the Somme battle it was just behind the German front line, and lay opposite the junction of the British right and French left at Maricourt. Its wood—sometimes called the Bois Favière—was among the French objectives for July 1st.

—to their doom. Over 700 casualties were their sole reward.

The 4th Division fared little better, even though it succeeded in breaking into the German position in no uncertain fashion. It was thought for a moment that it had forced its way into the village of Serre, which had been allotted as objective to the 31st Division. But of the latter only a few isolated groups ever reached the German line, where they all perished.

VIII and VII Corps

Yet the VIII Corps was commanded by that fearless leader, General Hunter-Weston, whose exploit in crossing the River Aisne in 1914 may well be remembered. Incapable of acknowledging failure, he was anxious to put in his reserve division, the 48th, and to make another bid for success. But as the rumours of the fall of Serre proved erroneous, he wisely decided to refrain. During the night the wreck of the VIII Corps retired on the British line.

To the north of the Fourth Army, the VII Corps of the Third Army participated in the great attack by an assault on Gommecourt, another strongly fortified point on the German front. This assault had not much to recommend it, except the urgent necessity of attracting the German reserves, and especially their artillery, away from the attack of the VIII Corps. Once more the method employed was to be a " pinching out " of the strong-point by convergent attacks against its shoulders. The chief difficulty was the breadth of No Man's Land.

The 56th Division, faced with an advance over half a mile of open ground, skilfully prepared a new forward jumping-off line by night. Owing to the nature of the operation, however, little concealment could be sought ; and the sole satisfactory result of this effort was to lure one whole enemy *Guard Division*, with artillery, on to that front.

The actual attack was carried out by the 56th Division (London Territorials) with great dash, and resulted in a deep bite being made into the German line to the north-west of Gommecourt. The 46th Division, to the south of the village, also achieved good progress, though advancing nothing like so far. The result was that the 56th Division, after a fierce struggle, had to relax its hold when its supply of ammunition, particularly its hand-grenades, began to fail. And finally the VII Corps went back, after having unhesitatingly played its part, at a cost of over 7,000 casualties.

The behaviour of the British troops throughout the Fourth Army had been

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worthy of the highest praise. Their casualties in that memorable attack amounted to no less than 60,000.

Progress in the South

Such was the profit and loss account for July 1st, 1916—perhaps one of the greatest landmarks of the whole War. But not for a moment did the failure of the centre and left of the Fourth Army deter the British High Command from making a further and prolonged effort. Both French and British had secured a relatively easy success on the right. Could this progress be kept up, the German line to the north of it must be rolled up; Thiepval and all those formidable works must fall. The Germans, trusting to their formidable defences, were not numerically strong, particularly opposite the XIII Corps and the French. On that flank they had been severely shaken. The prospect seemed attractive; the next task was to act quickly and to push home the attack where it had succeeded.

Unfortunately, for a variety of causes—lack of reserves on the right spot, difficulties of ammunition supply, inadequate and bad roads: all the little unforeseen difficulties of war which go to build up a formidable obstacle—the opportunity was missed. Pressure, though maintained, was inadequate to profit from the lack of reserves on the enemy's side. So a fortnight went by, and when again a real thrust forward was made, on July 14th, the Germans had brought up the pick of their divisions, and the Battle of the Somme entered on that phase so aptly termed by the Germans, "the blood-bath of the Somme."

A few salient features of this fortnight (July 1st–14th) are worthy of mention. On the morning of the 2nd it was ordered by the Fourth Army that the attack should be renewed; but the two corps commanders (X and VIII) declined to do so without renewed artillery preparation. Finally Sir Douglas Haig intervened, and very wisely decided to concentrate his effort on the right flank alone. But both Joffre and Foch insisted that the attack must also be pushed home against the centre if not on the left. As a result the Fourth Army began to indulge in inadequate or sterile efforts, although it is true that Fricourt fell, whilst the XIII Corps seized Bernafay Wood almost without opposition.

Trench-warfare Paralysis

Then the French, also, hung back. Progress became still slower, and the enemy's resistance hardened. The 38th

Photo: Keystone

NEAR HARDECOURT WOOD TO-DAY

The 39th Division of the 20th Corps were the French troops appointed to capture Hardecourt or Favière Wood. Like the British 30th Division on their left, they attained their purpose without much difficulty, although the Germans held on to a corner of the wood for some days. Général Nourrisson, the French commander, then wished to attack Hardecourt village, but as the British XIII Corps was unable to proceed to the second phase of its programme, this plan fell through. Our Allies eventually took Hardecourt on July 8th, and by August 12th had penetrated the German third line.

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Division (Welsh Territorials) took three days to clear Mametz Wood of the enemy; all other attacks seemed to lack power and decision. The reaction after the first day's assault became more pronounced. The paralysis of trench-warfare, and the inexperience of war which was now displayed by so many officers of all ranks, seemed to limit all action to straightforward attacks, unimaginative and often ineffective. Meanwhile the munitions situation began to cause some anxiety, and the ammunition account ran the risk of being overdrawn.

At length there came a change for the better. Time was clearly slipping by, and it was becoming urgent to smash the German position before it should grow too strong or be unduly reinforced. On July 13th it was to be attacked at dawn. The entire stroke had been planned by General Rawlinson, commander of the Fourth Army, himself. Sir Douglas Haig, at first reluctant, had finally consented to the attempt being made. The plan was neither more nor less than a dawn attack by four whole divisions.

Such an ambitious effort was necessitated by the nature of the enemy's defences; for a bare open slope of no less than 1,500 yards in width lay before a trench system which had been deliberately strengthened during many months. For success, therefore, two conditions had to be satisfied: first, that the enemy's wire should be destroyed by some artillery preparation; second, that the infantry should advance over the long, exposed slope by night, in order to escape the defenders' fire. It was not an easy task. The artillery, however, was in a favourable position and well served by the observation officers. The infantry attack was well conceived, and in execution was backed by first-class staff work and admirable preparations for movement by night.

At 3.20 a.m. on July 14th, four divisions, the 9th, 3rd, 7th, and 21st, advanced. The German line was carried without difficulty, and our troops now stood within sight of more open country, although formidable obstacles still remained ahead—chiefly woods which had been cunningly filled with defensive works of every sort. In the end it was to be found that this attack, to be wholly successful, should have come forty-eight hours earlier.

Delville Wood Again

On the right, the 9th Division, after forcing its way through Longueval, found itself confronted by Delville Wood, of evil memory. The 3rd Division carried Bazentin-le-Petit. Both the 7th and 21st Divisions made excellent progress, although finally both formations hesitated and failed to drive on as they might.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PRISONERS ON THE ROAD

Some of the British prisoners captured during the first Somme battle—or series of battles, as it may be more correctly described—on the road at Le Mesnil during August, 1916. The village of Le Mesnil lies to eastward of the Péronne—Bapaume road, between Sailly-Saillisel and Rocquigny.

Meanwhile, still farther on the right, in support of the main attack the 18th Division had set about clearing the dangerous salient of Trônes Wood, which had already been the scene of much fighting and cost all too many lives. The

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PRISONERS ON THE MARCH

A further batch of captive Britons—apparently deemed worthy of keen scrutiny by their guard—marching through Sailly-Saillisel on August 7th. The French advance reached this place during the middle of October, and the village was captured on the 18th of that month. Fierce fighting for the possession of Sailly-Saillisel Ridge, however, went on until November 12th.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PUTTING OVER A BARRAGE

An 18-pounder—one of the 808 employed by us in the Somme operations—putting over a curtain-fire or barrage during the Battle of Poziéres Ridge, July 30th, 1916. The gun is situated in Carnoy Valley (near Montauban), of which "Then and Now" photographs appeared on pages 322 and 323.

capture of this wood is best left to be told by the commander of the 12th Middlesex, for this terrible form of wood-fighting was to be repeated at Delville Wood and High Wood. The first battalion, so he says, which attacked the wood, had soon got lost and broken up, "playing just the game the Germans like," since it enabled the scattered parties to be enfiladed and shot down from behind. He goes on:

"I had to collect its remains, and with my own began to form a line clean across the wood. To talk of a 'wood' is to talk rot. It was the most dreadful tangle of dense trees and undergrowth imaginable, with deep yawning trenches criss-crossing about it; every tree broken off at top or bottom and branches cut away, so that the floor of the wood was almost an impenetrable tangle of timber, trenches, undergrowth, etc., blown to pieces by British and German heavy guns for a week. Never was anything so perfectly dreadful to look at . . . particularly with its gruesome addition of corpses and wounded men—many lying there for days and days. Our doctor found one to-day who had had no food or water for five days . . . but so dense is the tangle that even if you find a wounded man . . . and then leave him, you have lost him, simply because you can't find your way back to him.

"Many Germans Ceased to Live"

"Well, I formed a line . . . and with great difficulty traversed the whole length of it, about one mile. . . . Men nearly all much shaken by the din of shell-fire, and nervy and jumpy about advancing in such a tangle. . . . I immediately found that without my being there the thing would collapse in a few minutes. So off I went with the line, leading it, *pulling* it on, keeping it from its hopeless and humanly natural desire to get into single file behind me, instead of a long line on either side. Soon I made them advance with fixed bayonets, and ordered them, by way of encouraging themselves, to fire ahead of them into the tangle all the way. . . . This gave them confidence. . . . My left came on a hornets' nest. . . . I went for it. . . . A curtain may be drawn . . . many Germans ceased to live, and we took a machine gun.

"Then on again. . . . The Germans couldn't face a long line, offering no scattered groups to be killed, and they began to bolt, first back; then, as the wood became narrow, they bolted out to the sides and with rifle and automatic guns we slew them. . . . I did not want to show my people out of the wood, or too much out, for fear of letting the German artillery know how we had progressed. So far they had only laid it on thick, strong, and deadly in the belt we had left behind. . . . And finally the job was done, and I was thankful, for I thought we should never, never get through with it.

"Having cleared the shambles of live Germans, or practically so, I had then to think of keeping what we had got

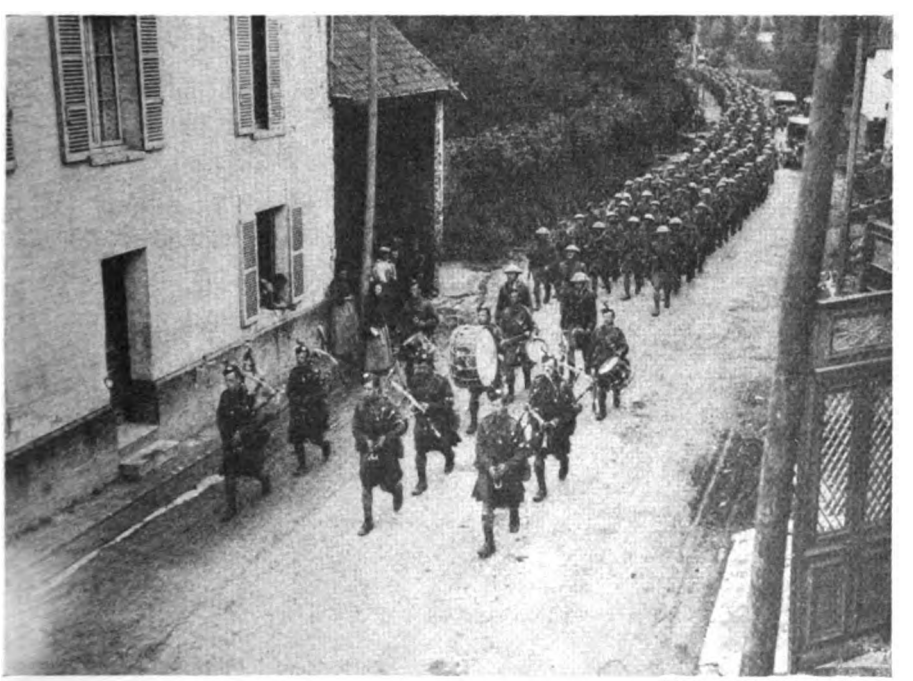

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MARCHING TO THE LINE

London Scottish, their bagpipes regarded with astonishment by the rustic spectators, marching through a village on the Doullens—Amiens road on their way up to the trenches. On the all-important July 1st this Scots battalion, with the Rangers, led the assault of the 168th Brigade in the 56th Division's attack on the Gommecourt salient. 616 losses were incurred out of 871 London Scottish combatants.

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with utterly tired men. Poor things, they thought, as one always does, that having done one job, somebody else would pop up and do the next—but there was nobody else; every man in the wood was now needed to cram on to the edge facing the Germans." [1]

To describe the horrors of the wounded and dying who lay lost in that wood words seem all but inadequate. Had there been more battalion commanders possessing the same qualities, the sure hunter's instinct, the clarity of vision in these terrible surroundings, as did Frank Maxwell, the Battle of the Somme might have ended differently. But such men as he are rare even among the best of British blood.

[1] *Frank Maxwell, V.C.*, pp. 154–8. These extracts are from letters written two days after the battle.

The Clue to the Battle

Whilst this struggle was raging in Trônes Wood, the forward rush of the attacking divisions was slowing down considerably. On the right, the 26th Brigade of the 9th Division forced its way into Longueval. The fighting was fierce. When the Germans were called upon to surrender, they firmly declined. "We die where we stand," they said. And they did. That attitude was to give the clue to the whole battle.

Above and close to Longueval stood Delville Wood, and there the South African Brigade of the 9th Division was to make history. By midday on the 15th the wood was in the hands of the South Africans, except the strong-points at the north-western corner. But it was one thing to take the wood, quite another to hold it. The Germans were soon counter-attacking and bombarding the wood implacably. All that night the Africans toiled at throwing up cover—for all attempts to oust the Germans from their strong-points had failed.

Throughout the 16th the Brigade held on to its trenches. By sundown the men were falling down for want of sleep. Again on the 17th the Africans made a gallant attempt to seize the German strong-points; again they failed. On the 18th the enemy once more made a terrific attempt to recapture the wood, wave after wave of infantry dashing itself on to the African entrenchments. The defenders, fewer and fewer in number, fought on until their rifle barrels were burning the wooden stocks. Then they drew back a little.

Two more days passed, and ever the remnants of that gallant brigade held

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A FRANCO-BRITISH GATHERING

Roye, the scene of this photograph, is situated 35 km. almost due south of Albert, and forms one of the southernmost of our "Then and Now" subjects. It is a large village, and lies at the point of convergence of main roads approaching from every direction of the compass. Its close vicinity very early became part of the fighting-zone—to be exact, in September, 1914—and the same year saw the place fall into German hands. The British first knew Roye when we extended our line to a point opposite it in February, 1917. The French recaptured the village on March 17th following. Above are troops of our 20th Division and the French 133rd Division seen together on March 25th, 1918.

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Photo: Keystone.

SUNSHINE AFTER RAIN

The wet road shows this title to be literal as well as metaphorical in application. Roye figured most prominently, from the British point of view, in 1918, when, during the enemy's advance on Amiens, the 61st Brigade of the 20th Division held up the Germans long enough for the remainder of the division to withdraw through Roye westward (March 26th). This feat was especially noteworthy as the brigade, which had been hurriedly brought up from further south in buses, was only 450 rifles strong at the time. The Germans eventually abandoned Roye on August 27th, 1918.

on, still awaiting relief. At long last, at nightfall on the 20th, the handful of survivors were able to hand over the ground which they had so magnificently defended. Into that wood, a mile square, there had fallen several thousands of shells per hour; every yard had been convulsed by high explosive and drenched with gas. The South Africans had gone in 121 officers and 3,032 men; on the 21st they mustered 5 officers and 750 men.

The Pounding of Pozières

Farther away to the left, on the 15th a like struggle began for the possession of High Wood. It seemed to become a repetition of the sanguinary struggle going on in Delville Wood. At the same time the 33rd Division captured a length of the important German switch-line which was preventing the capture of High Wood. But farther west the attacks of the 34th and 1st Divisions in the direction of Pozières came to nothing. A first effort was made at 9 a.m., and this was repeated at 6 p.m. The end of the struggle was unsatisfactory; the ground already won could not be held.

Once again the German machine-gunners were actually seen racing to their guns after the British barrage lifted—just in time to cut down the infantry advance. The bombardment of Pozières followed. This was impressive: "The whole place went up in brick dust, and when it was over no trace of a building could be seen anywhere. It was a wonderful sight, huge clouds of rose-coloured, brown, bluish black, and white smoke rolling along together with flashes of bursts, the whole against a pale green-blue sky and bright evening sunlight." [1]

There was a deal to learn about firing barrages, and this was being learned on both sides; but at what a cost! It was clear that the barrage making a "long lift" was no good at all, and so the "short and frequent lift" came into vogue. But it imposed a severe tax on the troops as regards confidence, both in their own artillery and in their leaders, as well as in their own capacity to advance by regular bounds.

The lack of success on this day pointed to heavy German reinforcement, and caused the abandonment of High Wood. The weather turned bad, and the cold rain brought about a postponement. But action was urgent. So the capture of Pozières, unsuccessfully attacked on no less than three occasions, was entrusted to the newly arrived 1st, 2nd, and 4th Australian Divisions. On July 23rd a combined attack was carried out. After a terrific struggle, the Australians took the greater part of the village.

[1] *The 34th Division*, p. 63.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CHÂTEAU DE MANANCOURT

Manancourt stands on the Tortille rivulet, slightly east of Sailly-Saillisel and 10 km. north-north-east of Péronne. It was outside the compass of the First Battle of the Somme, but figured in the enemy retirement of early 1917, and in the two great fluctuations of battle during 1918. Here we see the remnants of Manancourt's once fine château. The mansion has never been rebuilt, and the lower photograph shows the rubble still lying untouched.

Bayonet Work

Before the attack was over, a large number of them went " ratting " in the ruins, finding occasional fugitives from the rubble heaps, chasing terrified and shrieking Germans and killing them with the bayonet, or shooting from the shoulder at those who got away, and then sitting down on the doorsteps to smoke and wait for others to bolt from the cellars. . . . This grim sport—for so in the fury of war it was regarded—was not without great risk to the hunters.[1]

Elsewhere the attack of July 23rd was no great success. The XIII Corps at first got into, but could not take, Guillemont, and the remaining troops did no better. The truth was that the Germans had succeeded in constructing several strong-points which escaped bombardment. But although the attempt failed, Haig was not the man to give in. In one respect the method of future operations was to be changed; the attack was no longer to be conducted as one general effort, but to be regarded as an individual battle by each army corps. Truly a change for the worse.

Accordingly the 1st Australian Division was called upon to clear the remainder of Pozières village. For the next three days a fearful battle ensued, which finally left the Australians in full possession of that accursed spot. The artillery-work on either side was accurate and sustained. Only the dogged determination of the Australian infantry enabled them to survive a bombardment of unsurpassed volume and accuracy. Through barrages of frightful intensity they continued to bring up ammunition and supplies. Even the artillery in rear was almost exhausted with lack of sleep and constant work.

The survivors, even after a day's rest, " looked like men who had been in Hell. Almost without exception each man looked drawn and haggard, and so dazed that they appeared to be walking in a dream, and their eyes looked glassy and starey. Quite a few were silly and they were the only noisy ones in the crowd." [1] For some days they were utterly different from the traditional Australian soldier; " they were like boys emerging from long illness." [2]

Australians' Grimmest Nightmare

The 2nd Australian Division next took up the attack at Pozières, and for three days continued the attempt, but without advancing much beyond the limits reached by the 1st Division. Then, during the following days, July 31st to August 5th, those Australians went through an ordeal the like of which may almost be regarded as unequalled in the War. Step by step the Pozières Heights were wrested from the Germans by night-attacks and by sheer, ferocious, often hand-to-hand, fighting.

[1] *Australian Official History*, ii, p. 514.

[1] Letter from Sergeant E. J. Rule, 14th Australian Battalion.

[2] *Australian Official History*, ii, p. 599.

Photo: Keystone.

WHERE MANANCOURT CHÂTEAU STOOD

During our final advance in 1918, the line of the Tortille and the high Nuriu plateau gave the enemy a chance of withdrawal; but he was unable to avail himself of it, largely owing to the drain upon his reserves on the Lys and Scarpe, and the consequent need to shorten his line as rapidly as possible. In 10 days 23 British divisions drove 35 German divisions from one side of the Somme battlefield to the other. Manancourt itself fell on September 4th.

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Men went insane with the strain. As one officer wrote: "I have had much luck, and kept my nerve so far. The awful difficulty is to keep it. The bravest of all often lose it—courage does not count here. It is all nerve—once that goes one becomes a gibbering maniac. The noise of our own guns, the enemy's shells, and the getting lost in the darkness."

And they were fighting over "nothing but a churned mass of debris with bricks, stones, and girders; and bodies pounded to nothing. And forests! There are not even tree trunks left, not a leaf or a twig. All is buried, and churned up again. The sad part is that one can see no end of this. If we live to-night, we have to go through to-morrow night, and next week, and next month. Poor wounded devils you meet on the stretchers, are laughing with glee. One cannot blame them. They are getting out of this. . . . We are lousy, stinking, ragged, unshaven, sleepless. . . . I have one puttee, a dead man's helmet, another dead man's gas protector, a dead man's bayonet. My tunic is rotten with other men's blood and partly spattered with a comrade's brain." [1]

A bitter German counter-attack was defeated, and the 2nd Division was at last relieved by the 4th Australian Division on August 7th. The next series of battles, which brought the Australians within reach of Mouquet Farm, merely repeated within a narrower compass all the horrors and the fierce fighting that had gone before.

[1] *Australian Official History*, ii, p. 599.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

STRIFE NEAR FONQUEVILLERS

This village is situated north of Hébuterne and north-west of Gommecourt, and in 1915-16 was on the Allied front line. At the beginning of the Somme battle in the latter year it was held by the 46th Division (VII Corps). From here was launched the more northerly of the two attacks simultaneously made, on July 1st, against the Gommecourt salient. This picture shows our shells bursting opposite Fonquevillers.

Photo: Keystone.

PEACE, AND BARBED WIRE

A country scene near Fonquevillers to-day presents a spectacle no doubt bewildering enough to the ex-soldier pilgrim returning there. Notice the various coppices: in July, 1916, two small woods, or their remnants, lay between the 46th Division at Fonquevillers and its objective, Gommecourt. These were known as Gommecourt Wood and Gommecourt Park, while a little way to the north-east was Pigeon Wood. In all these thickets the trees are still but half re-grown.

British Efforts Unrequited

If the Australians underwent a trial which went as near as possible to reaching the uttermost limits of human endurance, many British divisions were undergoing much the same sufferings, although the results of their efforts were unrequited. The frontages of attack became yet narrower, which meant that the artillery concentrations possible on either side grew yet more formidable. It was during this period that a deterioration in the *moral* of certain of the weaker German divisions first became noticeable.

The fighting became more confused. A clever night-attack on August 9th/10th, after a gallant but ineffectual attempt by the 12th Division in broad daylight, helped matters considerably. On August 12th another combined attack was set going. The effort to take Guillemont failed once more. The 34th Division's attack broke down under machine-gun fire; but the 15th (Scottish) Division on the Australian right did better.

Together with the Australians, it advanced along "Munster Alley," thereby winning the approval of the Australians in a manner much appreciated. In fact, the friendship then formed was one

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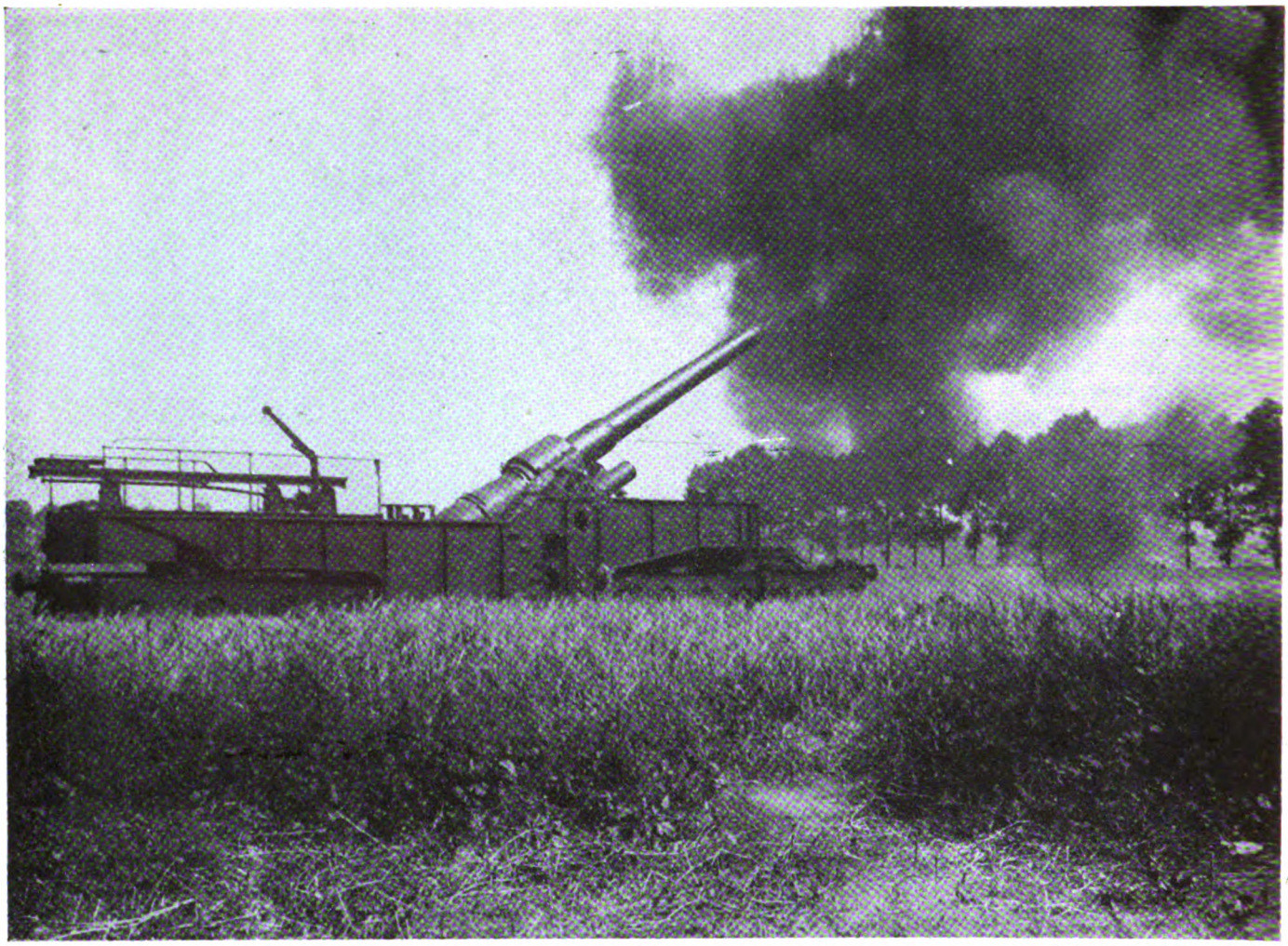

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

A GIANT IN ACTION

On page 736 it was stated that, with two exceptions, the heaviest gun (as distinct from howitzers) employed in the Somme preliminaries on the Fourth Army front was the 6-inch. These two exceptions were a single 9·2-inch weapon, and a solitary 12-inch. In this photograph we see the 12-inch monster belching forth as he lies in his field near Méaulte, just south of Albert. Other 9·2-inch guns were in service on the Third Army front, two being attached to the VII Corps.

which has lasted to this day. It was indeed a good thing that this should be so, for on one or two previous occasions, more particularly during the sanguinary attack at Fromelles on July 20th, when the 5th Australian Division was badly mauled, the Australian troops had expressed dissatisfaction with the aid they had received.

To the west of the advance on Mouquet Farm, the British 48th Division had also succeeded in capturing "Skyline Trench," a vital point to the defence. It was a fine achievement. This trench was re-lost and recaptured until nothing could be seen of it except shell-holes. On August 15th the 1st Australian Division replaced the 4th. This led to much bitterness, as the troops of the former felt that they were being strained beyond a just limit. General Birdwood's exhortations and addresses at first fell on deaf ears. But finally, the 1st Division went back determined "to do its job," but with a burning sense of injustice in the men's hearts.

Round Mouquet Farm

Meanwhile, to the left of the Australians, the II Corps had made some headway, and had approached Thiepval; but the general situation in front of Mouquet Farm was reaching a deadlock.

Since General Haig regarded it as essential that Ginchy, Guillemont, and Thiepval should be captured in preparation for his next big effort, in September, the Australians made yet another effort, and by the 31st, after most sanguinary hand-to-hand fighting, occupied the ground round Mouquet Farm after their seventh attempt. But the struggle for the German trenches to the east of the Farm only grew more intense and bitter. The 1st Canadian Division now relieved the Australians. It was repeatedly counter-attacked by the Germans, but with little result, until at last the villages were taken—Thiepval not until September 26th.

The rest of the fighting not described in this narrative—from July 23rd to September 15th—was all of the same description: piece-meal attacks carried out like the blows of a battering-ram. Though the various engagements were of the same desperate nature as that of the operations already described, the scale of this work does not admit of a description of them.

For September 15th a fresh effort to break through on a grand scale had been planned: a push to be carried out by the Fourth and Reserve Armies, with the co-operation of the French on our right. The object was, broadly, to attack south of the Albert—Bapaume road and gain the last line of the German

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prepared defences between the villages of Morval and Le Sars. But in fact this operation was deferred.

The general course of the attack which actually took place on September 15th was as follows. On the right of the Fourth Army the XIV Corps, with the 56th Division, formed a flank facing Combles; but the 6th Division, set to take a German work known as the Quadrilateral, did not make much progress, and took these entrenchments only on the 18th. The centre was formed by the XV Corps, in which the New Zealanders, 41st, and 14th Divisions captured Flers. On the left the III Corps attacked with the 47th, 50th, and 15th Divisions, the 15th having already been in the line for four weeks.

The 47th Division finally captured the terrible obstacle of High Wood, which had been the scene of several fruitless attacks since July 15th. It was indeed a wood only in name—" ragged stumps sticking up out of churned-up earth, poisoned with fumes of high explosives, the whole a mass of corruption. But there was life enough in the trenches and below ground. Outside the wood the country was a featureless wilderness. Imagine Hampstead Heath made of cocoa powder and the natural surface-folds further complicated by countless shell holes, each deep enough to hold a man, and everywhere meandering crevices where men live below the surface of the ground." [1] Of the Reserve Army, the Canadian Corps took Courcelette and Fabeck Graben.

"Germany's Death"

But beyond the immediate results of the day's fighting, the 15th September, 1916, is memorable because it witnessed the arrival in warfare of a new weapon—the Tank. As described by one historian writing sufficiently long afterwards to be able to appraise events at their true value [2]: "On September 15th the Germans were confronted with a surprise, which was finally to have a far more decisive influence on the War than their own secret weapons, the great howitzers and poison gas. For the Tanks, which now made their first appearance, were to be universally named after the Armistice, not without good reason, as '*Deutschlands Tod*,' (Germany's Death)."

Those of our readers who are without dread personal experiences of their own to remind them of the fact, will by now have appreciated, from what has already been written, that in our offensive actions, apart from the fighting-power of the Germans, the main factor in stopping our efforts to break through their line had always been the fire of their machine guns.

The murderous combination of this weapon and the wire entanglement, as invariably employed by the Germans on the defensive, when taken with the fact that the strategy of the Allies so often compelled us to attack, amounted to a scourge which was eating away our manhood. This was the case, as we found to our cost, right from the early days of the War—from the Battle of the Marne in September, 1914, when we first assumed the rôle of attacker, onwards.

To meet this deadly form of defence we had had at first—at the time when we were practically without artillery—nothing more than the superb bravery and determination of our infantry, who had to advance with their unprotected bodies into mazes of barbed wire where they were caught by streams of bullets.

Later, with the advent of more guns and more ammunition, it had been

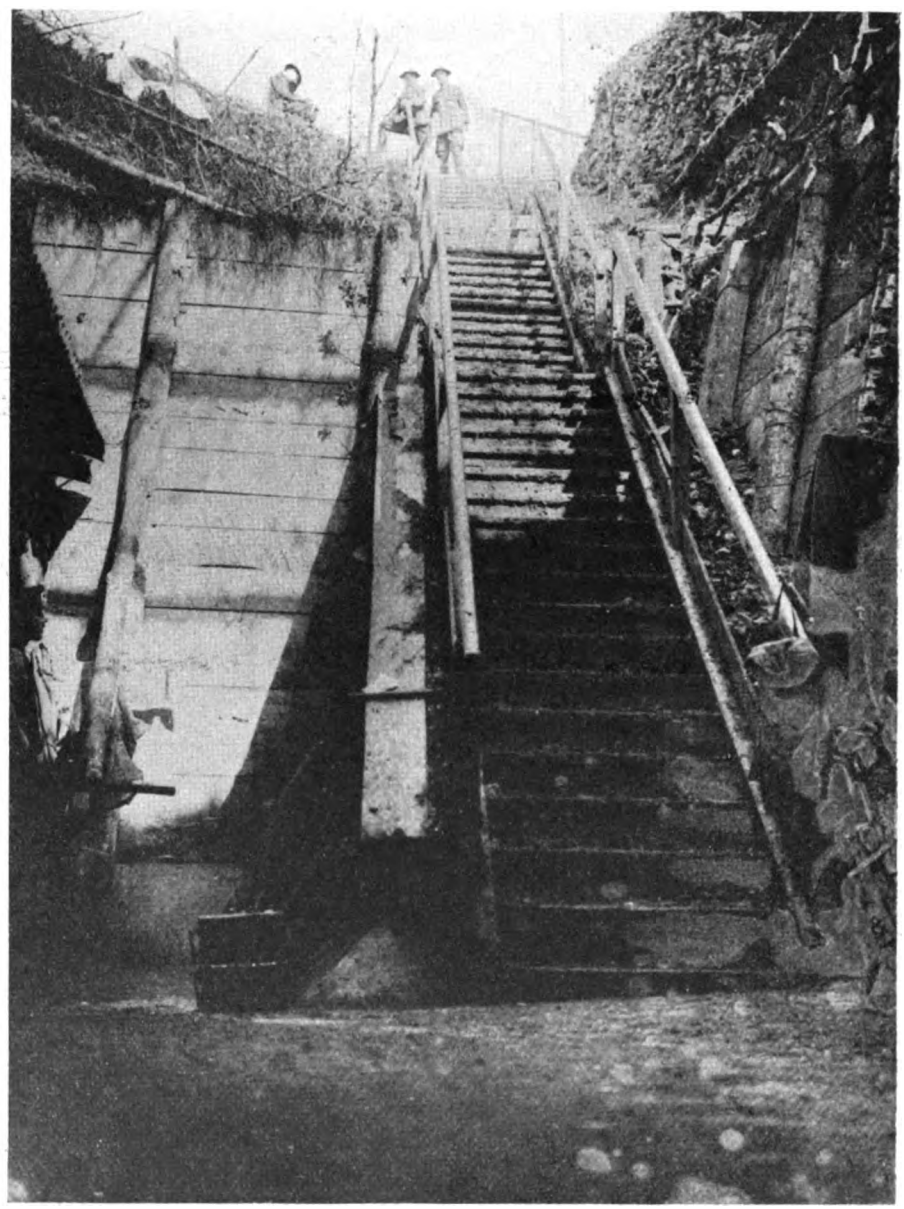

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A PALATIAL STAIRCASE

This imposing flight gives entrance to an ex-German dug-out at the northern corner of Bernafay Wood. It will be recalled that this wood, which lies between Montauban and the more famous Trônes Wood, was captured on July 4th, 1916, and that a dressing-station was established there. The above dug-out was among the captures of the 9th (Scottish) Division on the previous day, July 3rd. This division, belonging to the XIII or southernmost of our corps on the Somme front, had been in corps reserve during the initial stages of the battle.

[1] *History of the 47th Division*, p. 62.
[2] Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 270.

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thought feasible by a preliminary bombardment to pulverise and destroy the German defences, including the wire and machine guns, and to give such covering fire to our infantry when advancing as to make it possible for them to go forward. This had been the idea underlying our operations at Neuve Chapelle, at Loos, at various minor actions, and during the first part of the Battle of the Somme.

Enter the Tank

But now, after this last battle had been going on for six weeks, and we had once again been held up, there appeared on the scene a new help to aid our infantry in their terrible task. This was the "Tank"—the "big steel brother" of the infantry—which had been specially created to deal with their chief enemies. It could break its way through any wire entanglement, and was expressly designed to hunt out and eat up machine guns. The reason why these machines had not been used before the 15th September was that none were available.

The Tanks had a romantic interest for the whole world, and much has been written about their origin, and the correct assignment to various individuals of the credit for their creation. On this subject no more will be said here than to mention that the idea for the machines which went "over the top" in September, 1916, had been first put forward officially towards the end of 1914. The two men mainly responsible were Colonel Swinton, of the Royal Engineers, who proposed the scheme in October, 1914, and Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, who backed it—with naval funds.

Nor is it proposed to give any details or technical description of these machines. Most of our readers will have seen them. Many will have seen them in action, and some will have fought alongside or inside them. But it will not be out-of-place to point out the fact—which was not realised till long afterwards—that the appearance of this purely British weapon (which is now known in every nation in the world by its British name) marked the end of an epoch, and changed the whole character of land warfare. The reign of the machine gun was over.

At length 32 Tanks reached the position of assembly. Out of these, when they started on their attack, 9 broke down and 5 became "ditched." This

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DESERTED

Thousand upon thousand of rotting sandbags, with the chalk and flints falling through the rags, in a vacated British trench in the Fricourt salient, September, 1916. Fricourt had been captured by the 17th Division as long ago as July 2nd, and most of the remaining enemy trenches near it had fallen to us during the second stage of the advance, on July 7th. It was on the Bray road, not very far from the scene of this picture, that between July 5th and July 11th, 1916, the 7th East Yorks made a cemetery, which is one of two British cemeteries now at Fricourt.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE EATER OF THE MACHINE GUN

Of all the innovations of the War none had such far-reaching results as that deadly British weapon, the Tank. Unknown before September, 1916, it has by now been adopted by every armed nation in the world. As stated in the text, the two men mainly responsible for the creation and development of this new engine of war were Colonel Swinton, of the Royal Engineers, who proposed the scheme in October, 1914, and Mr. Winston Churchill who, quick to appreciate the possibilities of such a weapon, gave his support and backed the idea with naval funds. It is a matter for regret that when, in 1916, the enemy were first confronted with the apparition of this new and formidable device, the Tanks were not available in sufficient numbers to press home their advantage.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SPOILS OF WAR

An Australian official photograph showing a German general service waggon abandoned, while still fully loaded, during the hurried flight from the village of Bayonvillers which preceded our re-occupation of it in August, 1918. Bayonvillers lies just south of the Amiens—St. Quentin road, between Warfusée-Abancourt and Harbonnières.

left 18 to take part in the battle. In spite of their very slow speed, the breakdowns and failures inevitable to experimental machines used for the first time, and the fact that their crews were not completely trained, the Tanks rendered some valuable service and did sufficiently well to justify their existence. The secret of their production had been well kept, and they came as a surprise to the terrified Germans.

One Tank takes a Village

On the 15th, one machine in particular made its solitary way down what had once been the main street of the village of Flers and caused its abandonment by the eneny. Ten days later another lone machine captured the Gird Trench, with 370 prisoners.

The attack of September 15th was thus no more than a qualified success. So the battle went on as a ding-dong struggle, now merely a repetition of what had gone before; on September 26th Combles on the right, and Thiepval on the left, were carried. Then came the October rains, and progress became lamentably slow, while the sufferings of the troops grew apace. The Royal Naval Division, now numbered the 63rd, arrived in France and took its place opposite Beaucourt, where it was to display superb gallantry.

The grim struggle continued throughout that wet October, on and on; and the German *moral* showed signs of cracking. Yet in spite of this, on October 20th the Germans essayed a gallant counter-stroke, which was finely held. Both sides were reaching the limits of exhaustion.

Finally, after one week of vile weather in November, matters improved. Sir Douglas Haig thereupon determined to make one last attempt to carry the German line opposite the British left. The 31st, 3rd, and 2nd Divisions were put in against Serre; the 51st Division against Beaumont-Hamel. A fine rush carried the greater part of this fiercely-contested position, and particularly noteworthy was the work of the 51st and 63rd Divisions.

After that effort it became obvious that the weather and the state of the troops would permit of no further continuation of the grimmest battle that the history of the world could then show. So the fighting on the Somme came to a close.

Why, then, did we, despite our elaborate preparation, fail on July 1st?

Our method of attack had presumed the destruction of the enemy by intense and prolonged bombardment; and the first check thus came as a terrible surprise to us. But, above all, the main reasons of the failure on July 1st and later were the remarkable fighting-power of the German troops generally, and in particular the great skill and devoted gallantry of the German machine-gunners.

Photo: Keystone.

SPOILS OF PEACE

A heap of hay forms the peace-time trophy of the inhabitants of patched-up Bayonvillers. During the night of March 27th–28th, 1918, parties of the Germans forced their way south from Morcourt and Cérisy, and entered Bayonvillers, Lamotte-en-Santerre, and Warfuseé-Abancourt, almost simultaneously. This marked the approximate limit of enemy progress westward in this area.

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Germany's Heroic Machine-gunners

Time and again, when the issue was hanging in the balance during the most bitter fighting, the German machine-gunners could be seen rushing forward through a British barrage of shell so as to escape the deadly storm and plant their guns in the open, whence they would shatter our infantry following up. Exposing themselves regardless of danger, they would serve their guns to the death, "mowing the slopes as with a scythe of steel," and so hold up our attack until they could be cleared out of the way. Could they, would they, ever have met with such success against a Tank surprise attack?

Thus did the Germans sum up the New Armies: "The British Army . . . had not yet reached a sufficiently high tactical standard. The training of the infantry was clearly behind that of the German; the superficially trained British were particularly clumsy in movements of large masses. On the other hand, small bodies, such as machine-gun crews, bombers, trench-blockers, and special patrols, thanks to their native independence of character, fought very well. The strong, usually young, and well-armed British soldier followed his officers blindly, and the officers, active and personally brave, went ahead of their men in battle with great courage. But, owing to insufficient training, they were not skilful in action. They often failed to grasp the necessity for rapid, independent decision . . . great attacks were carried out in thick, often irregular lines. . . . To this must be attributed the heavy losses . . . although they were carried out with the most conspicuous courage."[1]

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DELIVERING SHELLS

A small fraction of the tremendous—yet still inadequate—mass of munitions which was consumed in the First Battle of the Somme. Lorries, by the dozen, are seen delivering shells by the hundred, at a dump behind the lines. Notice the camouflage covering to prevent "spotting" from the air. This photograph was taken on July 29th, 1916.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRINGING IN THE PIECES

Some of the human material on which the above shells, or their German counterpart, were designed to operate, is here seen being duly collected and brought in after the event by stretcher-bearers. This scene is laid on the Albert—Bapaume road near La Boisselle; the village itself lies in the dip beyond the crest of the nearer rise.

A Tribute to Both Sides

General Rawlinson had already written in the same strain during the actual fighting. His conclusions are identical:

"I cannot speak too highly of the spirit and self-sacrifice of our rank and file. The courage of the New Armies is magnificent, and, if they had been able to devote more time to training, they would have been able to hold on to many points of importance which they captured, but from which they were driven by the enterprising German machine-gunners."[2]

Again:

"The most noticeable feature . . . has been the fine fighting-spirit and extreme gallantry which has been exhibited by the New Armies. . . . All divisions . . . have done exceedingly well, particularly when they have been given specific objectives, and have had time to work out every detail of the attack beforehand. It is in the manœuvre battle they are likely to fail, owing of course to the lack of experience and

1 *Somme-Nord*, i, p. 20.
2 *Life of Lord Rawlinson*, Maurice, pp. 163, 168.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

THIS—MARK WELL!—IS A MAIN ROAD

In fact, it is the main road just outside Guillemont, as the Battle of Guillemont had refashioned it by the time the village was captured on September 3rd, 1916. An account of the capture, and of the long struggle which preceded it, has already been given beneath illustrations on pages 433 and 701. An interesting narrative of the fighting in this neighbourhood as seen from the German side is contained in the writings of one Ernst Jünger, who was in the forefront of the turmoil between Guillemont and the Schwaben Redoubt. One or two extracts are given on the opposite page.

training both of officers and men. I am sure, however, that this can be rectified during the coming winter." [1]

Yes, indeed, so it might. But unfortunately, owing to the steady drain of casualties, that greater experience was never gained, while training never could advance much beyond the bare requirements of trench warfare.

Defective also was the higher leading and General Staff work; but then, what else could be expected from improvised or inexperienced cadres? Similar reasoning holds good of the N.C.O.'s, who, in the New Armies at this period, knew little more than the rank and file. Lastly, there is the fact that after the experience of July 1st some of the higher commanders unquestionably became infected with "trench fever"—that is, they lost all power of decisive action in the face of risk. They could only think in terms of the obvious—i.e. of the slow, grinding struggle of attrition.

[1] *Life of Lord Rawlinson*, Maurice.

Testing the New Draft's Nerve

"It was one thing to take men by fifties and slowly weld them into a common endurance: it is quite another to launch a battalion, more than half of untrained recruits, across the open against all that organised death can deliver."

So the recruits and half-trained men of the Guards would be employed for three or four days in cleaning up the litter of battle "while the enemy shelled them more or less regularly with large black 5·9 shells—a very fair test of the new draft's nerves. . . . They took the noise and the shaking with philosophy. . . . 'There was some wondherin' in the new drafts, but no budgin', ye'll understand,'" as the drill-sergeant put it.[1] Nowhere did the results of such teaching show up more markedly than in the Guards.

But there was another fertile cause of failure, which may more easily escape notice: that is, the incompleteness of the artillery preparation preliminary to July 1st. As a result of the prolongation of the bombardment, there came to be felt an inadequacy of ammunition. Worse than that, the inferior quality of much of the shell fired during this period detracted from the results obtained; and this inferiority grew notorious. So the results of insufficiency in quantity were intensified by failure in quality.

Premature bursts were too common. The 4·5 howitzer batteries for a time became known as "suicide clubs." Fuses were defective; copper driving-

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *The Irish Guards*, p. 102.

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bands indifferently fitted. At the end of 1915 the situation among the 18-pounders had been described as "very serious," owing to faulty shell, whilst the newly-constructed gun carriages developed grave faults. The first heavy trench mortars proved unreliable. The numbers of British "dud" shell fired on the Somme, and subsequently found, amazed the gunners when going over the captured ground; on one sector of the front the blinds could be calculated "by the square yard." To such causes the incomplete destruction of the German trenches may in part be assigned.

The Responsibility

Such being the case, it was not surprising that a wave of indignation was raised when Mr. Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions, in answer to the complaint concerning these "wholesale and terrible defects of guns, ammunition, and fuses," declared that, "The Garrison Artillery in France is entirely untrained, it cannot shoot, and is quite unfitted to work the perfect weapons which I have provided."

General Rawlinson, when asked to report on the matter, made short work of the Minister's aspersions by adducing specific proofs of the accuracy of the gunners' work. The true cause of the deficiencies discovered in France was not the alleged lack of skill at the front, but the striving for quantity before quality at home. Munitions and high explosives need the greatest care in their manufacture. In hurried design and construction of plant, or improvised factories, in unskilled or diluted labour, in skilled men transferred from other trades, still more in the hasty inspection carried out by supervisors untaught in that class of delicate work—there, indeed, must be sought the prolific sources of the frightful list of munition failures in the battles of the Somme. Had the guns and munitions and hand-grenades been as perfect as the necessity demanded, the supply might have proved adequate; the results on the battlefield could have been, in many respects, very different. To that extent the soldier in the field is dependent for his life, if not actually for his success, on the work which is done in the factories at home.[1]

Let it be understood, however, that in stating these facts there is no intention of belittling or disparaging the truly marvellous work done in the way of producing munitions of every type.

In the last analysis one may well ask what the result of all this carnage may

[1] See *Official History of the War*, 1916, i, p. 120, and *Life of Lord Rawlinson*, Maurice, p. 174.

Photo: Keystone.

THE GUILLEMONT ROAD TO-DAY: TRÔNES WOOD ON THE LEFT

Ernst Jünger, who was among the Germans driven yard by yard out of Guillemont, wrote afterwards: "The names of the tiniest Picardy hamlets are memorials of heroic battles to which the history of the world can find no parallel. There it was that the dust first drank the blood of our trained and disciplined youth. Those fine qualities which had raised the German race to greatness leapt up once more in dazzling flame, and then slowly went out in a sea of mud and blood. . . . The terrible losses . . . were principally due to the old Prussian obstinacy with which the tactics of the line were pursued."[1]

[1] Quoted by R. H. Mottram in *Journey to the Western Front.*

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have been. That it exerted a far greater influence on the outcome of the War than was believed at the moment is unquestionably true. As time effaces the painful memories of the battle, and as history is able to probe the past with fuller knowledge and with less fear of wounding living susceptibilities, so it is coming to light that the losses endured by the British Army on the Somme had a similar and perhaps more lasting counterpart on the enemy's side of the front.

German Sufferings

Once the formidable German defence had been broken, the boot, so to speak, changed over to the other leg. Bereft of the shelter of their field-fortresses, the Germans were beginning to fight in the open, in improvised trenches, with all the attendant drawbacks appertaining to such a situation. That was the reason why they offered the most desperate resistance to the British attacks on the southern half of the battlefield, when the New Army divisions at length forced them to evacuate their front and second lines.

Unknown to the gallant attackers, it was at this stage that the equally gallant defenders were suffering losses and enduring hardships which at least equalled and perhaps surpassed their own. Though we little realised the fact at the time, it was the fearful carnage that went on between Fricourt and Montauban, and to the north of those places, which broke the old German Imperial Army. The Germans, in fact, never recovered from the loss of the flower of their officers, N.C.O.'s, and old soldiers at Verdun and on the Somme. It was the best of their troops who were maintaining that desperate opposition to the British attacks in the latter battle. When those men were gone, the German High Command was horrified at the prospect which lay before it.

Let our former enemy speak for himself: "The best of the old German Army lay dead in the battlefields of Verdun and of the Somme. That which later did duty in the ranks bore a gradually increasing appearance of a militia. As time went on, in proportion to the dwindling number of old peace-time officers there was an increasing number of young fellows, gifted with the best of intentions but with inadequate experience. At the same time the old corps of N.C.O.'s vanished, so that in time the difference between N.C.O. and private ceased to exist, very much to the detriment of discipline."[1] This growing inferiority was to last until 1918, when the arrival of fresh and seasoned troops from the Eastern

[1] *Wissen und Wehr*, No. 9, 1924.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TRANSPORT THEN

Transport passing through Fricourt, on the Fricourt—Albert road, during August, 1916. This village, which appeared as part of the distant background in the Mametz pictures on page 665, lay in an angle of the German line at the time when the first Somme battle opened, and was captured by the 17th Division, after an overnight struggle, on July 2nd, 1916. The same afternoon the division successfully stormed Fricourt Wood.

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Photo: Keystone.

TRANSPORT NOW

Fricourt has earned a grisly notoriety as being the first village to suffer the complete annihilation which presently was to overtake many places between the Ancre and the Hindenburg Line. There is a tale of a Y.M.C.A. worker who received instructions to proceed to Fricourt and install a hut. He and his driver set off in a car, and presently the driver stopped, in the middle of a brown and quite featureless desert. "Something wrong?" the Y.M.C.A. man asked. "No," said the driver. "This is Fricourt."

Front enabled the Germans once more to regenerate their forces in the West for the great offensive of that Spring.

The German Official Version

By July 31st, 1916, the Germans now admit,[1] the battle conditions had completely changed. The German troops lay for the most part in shell-holes, since continuous trenches were systematically destroyed. They were certainly more difficult targets for the enemy, but their situation was imposing an enormous burden on their physical and moral powers of resistance; it was rendering most difficult any system of command, supply, and even the removal of the wounded. The men suffered severely from the lack of drinking-water.

During the months of July and August alone, the total German casualties amounted to no less than 243,129; and this huge figure does not include losses caused by the preliminary British bombardment, nor any casualties incurred outside the fighting divisions—that is, by corps and army artillery and other troops. That the latter must have been appreciable can be gathered from the admission of the loss of 109 guns to the north of the Somme during the bombardment; whilst to the south of the river the entire divisional artillery of the *121st Division* was destroyed.

On the other hand, the successes on the Somme were very dearly bought by us, for the cream of our army vanished in the fearful murder-contest into which the battle degenerated.

The effect of all this ferocious fighting was not without far-reaching repercussions, and particularly was this the case with the Australians. Relying on voluntary enlistment, and having a relatively small population, it was not likely that losses such as the Australians endured on the Somme could be made good with speed or certainty. Conscription was mooted, but was rejected. The feeling against the British High Command grew bitter.

"Was it Worth the Cost?"

Throughout the Empire there arose searchings of heart. Pride at the stubborn qualities of the race could not prevent the awful question: was it worth the cost? Was it worth sacrificing the flower of the nation to wear down the German Army? Doubts arose as to whether the German casualties were as high as they were placed by the optimistic estimates issued at the time.

As has been said, it is now realised that the Germans suffered, in quality at least, relatively as much as, if not more than, ourselves. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly true that the British Army never entirely recovered from the slaughter of the Somme; and to this day the nation is feeling the after-effects of the loss of its best elements.

[1] *German Official History*, x, published in 1936.

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CHAPTER XLVII

HOW THEY LIVED AND DIED ON THE SOMME

Men who fought through the long-drawn-out Battle of the Somme and who have lived to tell the tale are unlikely ever to forget those months of seemingly futile slaughter. To-day, we can discuss such a conflict with calm. In those summer months of 1916 there was plenty of gallantry, but little of anything else, save suffering and death. Certainly there was no calm and no respite for the fighting battalions. In this, the third chapter devoted to the battle, is conveyed something of the atmosphere existing during the days when the civilian army won its spurs.

ALONG the old battlefields of the Somme there stands a chain of War memorials, smooth and fair to look upon: 29th Division, Newfoundlanders, Ulstermen, Highlanders, New Zealanders, 16th (Irish) Division, to name but a very few among the multitude. How inadequate they are to represent the sufferings of the men they commemorate!

15 Weeks of Untold Endurance

Every battalion, every battery, which fought on the Somme, deserved a monument; every man who fell on that field could be deemed worthy of some memorial whereby posterity should remember him—not only because he took part in that fiercest of struggles, but because he suffered hardship to an extent that is scarcely realised. Life on the fields of the Somme is a record of untold endurance, suffering, and devotion to the common cause. Nor was this display of fortitude limited to a single day; the battles of the Somme lasted for fifteen weeks; and although the same men were not employed without a break throughout the protracted conflict, many, many, were engaged for days on end, and that more than once.

Countless numbers spent whole weeks within range of the enemy's guns. Remember, they were all volunteers: not one man had pressure applied to him to go and face that gruesome reality. Having gone, right well they performed their side of the contract. There is much talk now of "the horrors of Passchendaele." Yet in many respects the Somme battles, for sheer grimness, stood no whit behind the later struggle in Flanders. The fighting of 1916 may even have been more stubborn and bitter. There may have been less high explosive; but there was perhaps more close fighting. The stories of Delville and High Woods are almost unique in that war of horrors.

But the men of the Somme were still animated by that first ardent zeal of the New Armies; they made terrific efforts; they endured hardships immeasurable; and they complained but little. The public had not yet grown so shocked by the cost of battle as it was to become only one year later; so that the Somme is now almost being relegated into the limbo of "old, far-off, unhappy things," whilst the controversy over Passchendaele still flares up and revives memories of 1917.

It is indeed remarkable how the army on the Somme remained unshaken, uncomplaining, and unbroken in spirit to the end. "It is a matter for amazement that the troops called upon to take part in the new battle [September] had suffered nothing in their morale. This is not to suggest that they affected the same kind of optimism which had distinguished them early in July. The vast majority were survivors of the earlier battles and included many returned wounded. Their attitude was rather fatalistic than enthusiastic, while their discipline was extraordinarily high."[1]

Repulsive and Horrible

They groused and swore; but they never failed their leaders, however terrible the task which lay ahead. To make matters worse, the atmosphere of destruction and desolation stretched far and wide beyond the actual battlefield. As the British front line slowly advanced past the Bazentins and Montauban, it left an area behind which became, if possible, more repugnant than the newly-won ground. Even right in rear of the battle conditions grew little better.

"The whole place was ghoulish. The reek from the guns, the dead horses, the foul soil and the lachrymatory shells made the place repulsive and horrible. And yet, in the holes and trenches and dug-outs in this hill-side, hundreds of R.A.M.C., artillery and infantrymen slept, ate, scratched themselves and swore from morning till night, hoping for a slight wound to take them out of the line and, with luck, to England."[1]

The stench of the battlefield grew worse as time went on; conditions grew still less endurable when the flood gates of heaven opened in October. The sun-dried putrefaction in the trenches was washed to the surface anew. What man is there who, having lived in the odour of death and of trench-sanitation, can ever forget that pungent, fœtid smell? And the taste of the chlorinated water? And, right away in rear, the villages turned into field hospitals, reeking with ether, iodoform, and disinfectant?

But enough: the memory of it all is too nauseating to be renewed. Only one picture of trench life on the Somme in August need be given:

"The trench had been blown to pieces in many places and one had to climb out and run across the mounds of thrown-up earth. In many places the men who had been killed a week or ten days ago were lying in the bottom of the trench, and one had to walk and crawl over them. Many had been half buried by the shells, and only their faces or hands or feet could be seen. They had been trampled into the soft earth by the many reliefs who had passed along the trench since they were killed. Many of the bodies were not complete; in one place a pair of legs were lying in a heap and no signs of the rest. To add to the horror of it all, there were millions and millions of flies everywhere. As we climbed along over the heaps of corpses they rose in dense black clouds round us, with a hum like an aeroplane. I was nearly sick with the stench and sights."[2]

[1] Hutchison, *Pilgrimage*, p. 105.

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front.* By a Rifleman.

[2] *Master of Belhaven's Diary.*

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Plugging Their Own Wounds

One more, perhaps: "Men could give hideous isolated experiences of their own"—so Rudyard Kipling describes troops in the trenches—"it seemed to each survivor that he had worked for a lifetime in a world apart—but no man could recall any connected order of events. . . . Always a crowd of men seated or in fantastic attitudes, silent, with set absorbed faces, busily engaged in trying to tie up, staunch or plug their own wounds—to save their own single lives with their own hands. When orders came to these they would shake their heads impatiently and go on with their urgent, horrible business. Others, beyond hope, but not consciousness, lamented themselves into death." [1]

Yes, indeed the lot of the infantryman during the Somme almost baffles description. There is little need to say more on that head! Yet his comrade with the guns had a task little more enviable, even though the batteries would, normally at least, lie back well behind the front line. It would sometimes be thrown in the teeth of the artillery that they had a "cushy time of it; they're always on the scientific, they are; they don't know what war means"—such was a sentiment that might be heard among the infantry. Yet it was perhaps the infantry which did not altogether appreciate the gunners' share in the business.

If the gunners might receive less attention from the machine guns, they made up for it by coming in for an extra dose of 5·9's and all the luxuries of the "heavy goods." To receive 100 or 200 of such shell at one sitting all over a battery was a normal occurrence. There was excruciatingly hard work, too; shells and ammunition to be handled; digging galore—and digging to stand the "heavy stuff" meant going deep down!

Neither was a battle much of a treat. "The men are very tired and the layers nearly exhausted, although we have changed them as often as possible. My guns have already fired nearly a thousand rounds each and are red-hot. We have to keep swilling them out with our precious little stock of water. Every now and then I have to stop one gun to allow it to cool, meanwhile increasing the fire of the others. We are taking it in turns to be awake, dividing the night into watches. I have now got more or less accustomed to the noise, and my head no longer hurts." [2]

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *The Irish Guards*, p. 173.
[2] *Master of Belhaven's Diary*, p. 233.

No "Cushy" Job Here

Working at their guns, very often unable to move or take cover when the German shell began to straddle the battery, in perpetual dread of their ammunition dumps "going up"—as they very often did, if struck by bursting shell—the gun detachments' life was no pleasant one.

Then, for a change, there would be forward observation duties which entailed the most hazardous visits to the front line, through barrages and all the horrors; constant repair of telephone lines; ammunition fatigues. No: gunners ran risks which stood not one whit behind such as fell to the lot of the infantry.

And as they kept up with the slow advance of the latter, their surroundings

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UNDER SHELL-FIRE

One of the most gallant and gruelling tasks in the whole business of warfare is here seen being performed—the bringing in of wounded from the battlefield under shell-fire. The scene is near Ginchy, during the Battle of Ginchy, which formed part of the third phase in the Somme engagement (September, 1916). In passing, it may be noted that another task of quite a different nature, but requiring, perhaps, no less "nerve," was the taking of photographs in the battle-zone. The above is a good example of camera-work in a highly dangerous situation.

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did not improve. When it came to taking up a new position, often the gunners could not put a spade into the ground without turning up a leg or a hand or even a head. Men's sensibilities grew quite blunted, and they grew to regard such remains no longer as dead human beings " but simply as horrible, obscene things to be hastily covered over with a spadeful of earth and chloride of lime." [1]

Naturally enough, there were momentary weaknesses ; some men hung back, stayed behind, became stragglers. Still, even among them real sinners were few ; the majority recovered themselves and made desperate efforts to rejoin. In the crowd of those who were genuinely lost by their units, it is astonishing that there should have been so few weaklings shirking the daily terror which lay ahead. They remembered their pals, and loyalty often made them rise above the dictates of fear.

Nearly every straggler would make piteous appeals to the nearest troops for a " certificate " to prove his straggling to be accidental. Here and there, it is true, there was a deserter ; and here and there such a criminal was duly shot by sentence of court-martial : it was all very beastly, and very crude ; but still, there it is. Without such a prospect, some of the weaker brethren might have succumbed ! But oh, how the troops loathed such a job ! How many a commanding officer would not have seen his right hand shot away rather than take the awful decision to send such a criminal for trial—and to his doom !

Shooting Deserters

Many and many times was such a " crime " concealed, condoned—anything rather than the fatal decision. The more tender-hearted C.O. would always act with clemency, and so a first offender of this type generally " got away with it." Alas ! too many absentees were caught by the military police.

But there were bad cases, as when two deserters were apprehended near Boulogne, after being missing just one week on the Somme. They actually pleaded that they were looking for their regiments after losing themselves on the battlefields. Good going that, and not much time wasted in a fruitless search !

As the divisions were brought nearer and nearer to the firing-line, so their hardships and their miseries slowly increased. Nightly accommodation grew more Spartan, and even at times positively disgusting. " I slept in a stinking cow-shed last night," wrote one private, an old public-school boy, nurtured since his birth in extreme comfort ; " bedfellows of every regiment, large and small. Hardly got a wink ! " Soon cover of any sort was not to be had for the night. In the trenches many slept in shell-holes or on the firing-step ; others might fall asleep at the bottom of the trench in mud and water.

They often lived like animals. There

[1] *The Master of Belhaven's Diary*, p. 237.

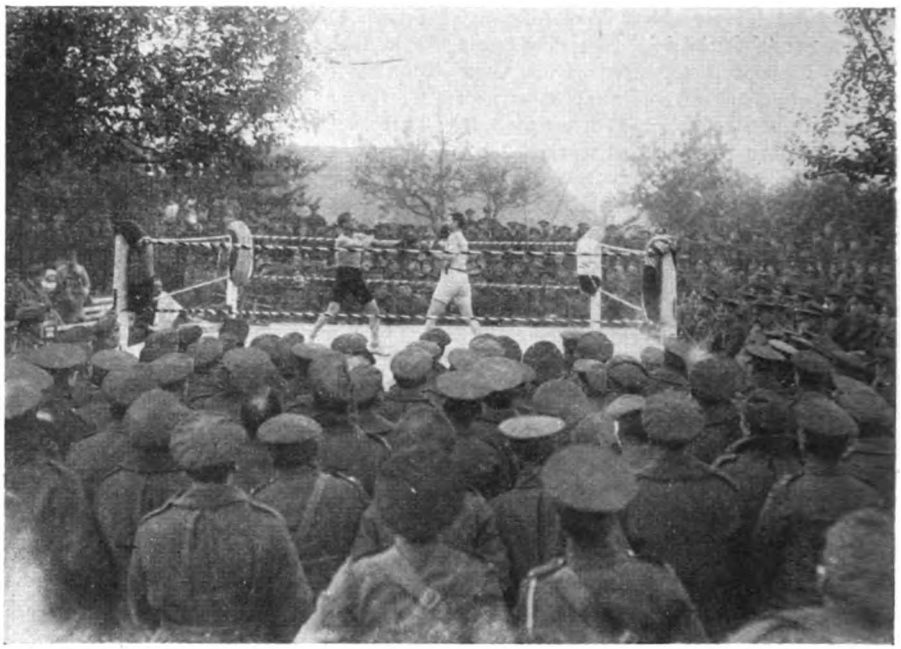

Photo : *Imperial War Museum.*

FISTICUFFS

To judge from the size of the audience, this fight is the big event of the season. The match took place during September, 1916, at Toutencourt, a back-area village 13 km. west-north-west of Albert. This form of recreation, in addition to being healthy, was just one of the means by which troops who had been fighting on the Somme sought forgetfulness when and while they could.

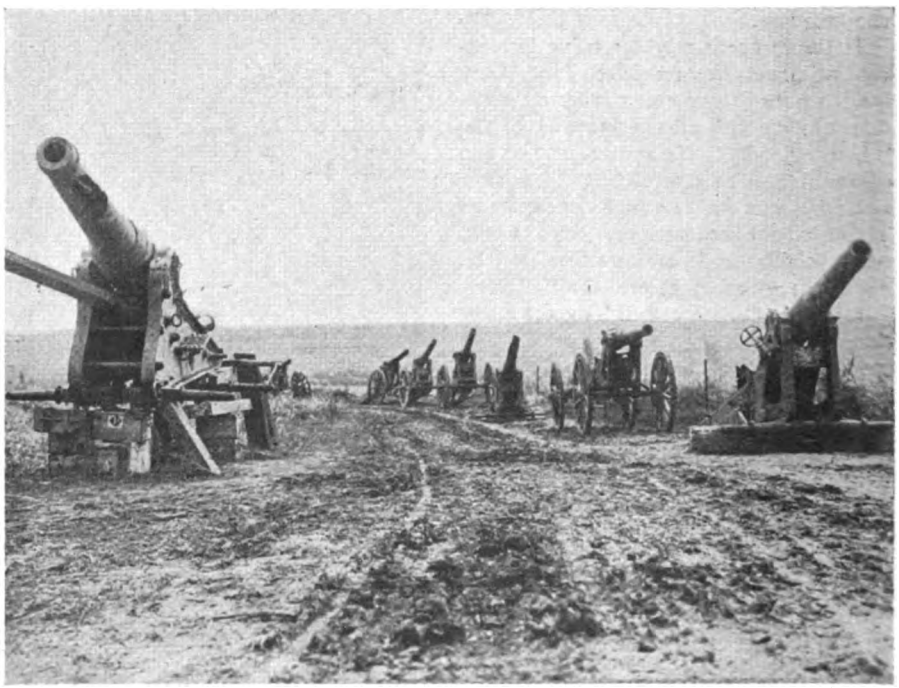

Photo : *Imperial War Museum.*

CAPTURED GUNS

Eight guns, captured from the enemy during the Somme fighting, photographed near Albert during September, 1916. Although starting from considerably higher up the scale, the Germans, like ourselves, found it necessary to maintain a constantly increasing quantity of artillery on the Western Front. Their counter-barrage in July, 1916, was a worthy reply to our own shelling.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WAITING

A group of Somme wounded waiting in patience—and in many cases agony—to be evacuated to hospital as quickly as the transport facilities would allow. The number of beds available in general and stationary hospitals during early 1916 was something under 40,000. During July this number rose to 50,000, and in August to 70,000. This in itself is a commentary on the First Battle of the Somme.

was "little shelter in the muddy trenches, but the men were so tired that they took no notice of the mud and the rain. Pigs are often found living under better conditions than we were, for no quarters as luxurious as a pig-sty were to be found on the battlefield." [1]

In the back areas rations were usually plentiful, for quarter-masters would indent for the strength of the battalion as it might be before going into action. In the end, all too often, there would be double rations and more for the companies. In the firing-line it was a very different tale; and lucky was the man who could reckon on a regular supply of tinned food!

Yet even in rear, rations occasionally had a trick of going wrong, as when a convoy of supplies might get held up or left beneath a broiling sun—with disastrous results. In one division tinned butter arrived, after a complete absence of that commodity for some days. Greedily it was pounced upon. Visions of scrambled eggs and buttered toast assailed one gourmet who prided himself on his cooking. Quickly an eager bayonet was applied to a seductive tin.

[1] *Tales of Three Campaigns*, p. 198.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON THE AMIENS—ALBERT ROAD

A team of heavy howitzers—8-inch Mark V's—being drawn by caterpillar-tractors along the above-named road during August, 1916. The guns belong to the 135th Siege Battery, R.G.A. There were at this time three classes of battery—field, garrison, and trench-mortar. Garrison batteries were either "siege" or "heavy." Notice the curious design of the caterpillar-tracks on these tractors.

Gas Attack—Unofficial

But oh, horror! From the orifice thus made there fizzled out a jet of malodorous gas, reminiscent of the best brand released during the last attack. Next there slowly trickled out some drops of iridescent fluid which might have exuded from the engine of the lorry that had brought the stuff. "Lord help us!" groaned the disappointed glutton; then, brightening up, he added: "Thank God it wasn't tinned cheese!"

What enabled these men to stand such an ordeal? What steeled their nerves to bear up amid such squalid surroundings? It is surely because in the British temperament there lurks a curious semi-humorous philosophy, fatalistic and long-suffering; and this settled down upon the army and gripped it fast.

But what did the men think of it all themselves? One explanation, which strikes at the root of the matter, is this: "Ye'll understand that in those days we was all countin' ourselves for dead men—sooner or later. T'was in the air, ye'll understand—like the big stuff comin' over." [1] Such was the Irish view of the matter.

Or, as an Englishman put it: "All the time that you ain't picking V.C.'s off the German wire, you're busy digging graves for yourself to be buried in. You'll fill one of your own holes for sure; so why worry?"

Yet another put it more briefly: "It's either the frying pan or the fire—all day and all night long. You get used to it!"

And the Scottish point of view was much the same. A well-known sergeant of the London Scottish, on being awarded a D.C.M., anxiously enquired

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *The Irish Guards*.

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whether he had been reported for any outstanding act of bravery, which might have brought him the decoration. On being informed that the medal was presented to him for consistently fine behaviour in action, he appeared relieved. On being asked the reason, he explained that "any man who commits an act of exceptional gallantry in this war shows himself guilty of a lamentable lack of self-control."

An Officer's Praise

The risk of death, the hopeless attack, had come to be regarded as all in the day's work—to a degree which to this moment remains incomprehensible. It was just foolish to try to exceed the normal standard of bravery required to get through any job: it usually meant death. An officer of great experience of the world, a conspicuously brave man, wrote home of his men thus:

"What wonderful people are our Infantry! What a joy it is to be with them! When I am here I feel—well, I can hardly describe it. I feel, if it were possible, that one should never go away from them.

"I can never express what I feel about the men in the trenches; and nobody who has not seen them can ever understand. . . . The men are practically without rest. They are wet through most of the time. They are shelled and trench-mortared. They may not be hit, but they are kept in a perpetual state of unrest and strain. They work all night and every night, and a good part of each day, digging and filling sandbags. . . . They have not even a blanket. . . . At present they are getting a tablespoon of rum to console them, once in three days. The curious thing is that all seem so much more contented here than the people at home. The poor Tommy shivering in the trenches is happier than the beast who makes capital out of the war. Everybody laughs at everything here. It is the only way."[1]

The Australian soldier was even more cavalier in his manner of facing danger. With a carefree gait, almost a swagger, he would face barrages unconcerned, almost smiling. And he soon discovered that their bark was worse than their bite. He was always ready to run a sporting risk. "Give it a go," became the "digger's" normal attitude. As a veteran major expressed it on the battlefield: "I have to walk about as if I liked it; what else can you do when your men teach you to?"[2]

A gay lot, and quite unbroken to formal notions of European military ceremony. An Australian lieutenant remarked that he could tell when his men were ready for any desperate venture, for then they would greet him

[1] Fielding, *War Letters to a Wife*, p. 134.
[2] *Australian Official History*, iii. p. 519.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT BIENVILLERS-AU-BOIS

The village called Bienvillers-au-Bois lies well off the main roads, about 17 km. south-west of Arras: on either side of it being, respectively, Pommier and Hannescamps. Having remained throughout the War well within our back areas, Bienvillers witnessed few events of any military significance—although this photograph, taken on June 30th, 1917, shows it to have already suffered from the almost inevitable bombardment.

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in the morning with salutations such as —" Say, Joey, what are we doing next ? "

Good humour, resignation, and patience normally prevailed. Swearing and grousing were generally but skin-deep ; though both were universal. They could still laugh—especially at themselves. As one would-be poet once recited to a crowd of listeners out of the line :

" Then I 'eard a beggar squealin' out for quarter as he ran,
Yes ; I thought I knew that voice—I stopped—an' it was ME ! "

A Letter to a Girl

The roar of laughter coming from his audience proved how very deep the gibe had gone home, and how almost every listener was prepared to make merry at his own weakness. Among that crowd none laughed louder than a youngster who had a few days before sent off the following letter to his girl at home. The censor passed it, so here it is :

" Dearest Flo, Just to tell you my luck the first day under fire. The company moved up towards High Wood which is hell's own kitchen and I was scared stiff. My heart was beating that I shook all over. After hours we got to a German trench and there was a lot of shooting and shelling. It all turned a blank to me. Then suddenly six Germans came out from somewhere with bloodcurdling guttural shouts that caused me to jump like a startled cat. Then I tried to turn to run, but my feet refused to budge. I raised my rifle to shoot but my nerveless fingers could not press the trigger. A moment of seeming eternity passed. The Germans rushed forward and past me as if they never saw me ; when I suddenly found my own body responding to a murderous yell that seemed to come from me. Hardly hearing the whizz of bullets I turned and ran after the Germans with my bayonet to the front. Soon they came straight into our reserve company who knocked them over, and I came in falling down almost on top of them. The colonel was there and put a flask of brandy to my mouth, called me a hero and said I would get a military medal for taking six prisoners single-handed.

" You mustn't tell, dear, but the truth is I was that frightened I never saw that they had their hands up till they were past me. They were mad with fright and wanting to surrender. The trouble is now I've got to go up into the line again to-morrow. That's what you get for showing bravery ! "

Indeed, this capacity for squeezing a laugh at the everyday events of life under these depressing conditions enabled many men to survive the mental torture of these weeks. The desire to indulge in even the crudest form of gaiety, though stifled in the trenches, could never be repressed. It spread away back, until it reached its climax in the well-known estaminets of the back areas.

Photo : Keystone.

DULY REPAIRED

Bienvillers-au-Bois will no doubt be remembered by some readers as a billeting-place, while others will recall the cemetery begun here by the 37th Division in September, 1915. This cemetery, later used by other divisions, to-day contains upwards of 1,600 graves, comprising 1,567 United Kingdom, 25 Australian, 9 New Zealand, 3 Canadian, 1 South African, and 1 German.

Squeezing a Laugh Somehow

On the Somme battlefield itself the tendency remained irrepressible : " One evening we felt we required a little enlivenment, so somebody suggested our getting the padre's harmonium out of the Q.M. stores. We dragged it into the open between the horse-lines and the bivvies and then I played rag-time ditties until a crowd gathered round. It reminded me of a minstrel troupe on the beach at the seaside, with the rumble of the guns serving as the murmuring of the sea. But oh, how we missed the sight of the girls in the audience, girls in their summer clothes with bathing costumes over their arms. . . . Would those days ever come again ?

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Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

REPAIRING THE ROAD

In this interesting photograph a body of German prisoners, under French supervision, is engaged in repairing the road between Contay and Amiens, while a long column of British R.E. lorries occupies the further verge. The roads in the Somme area were, in 1916, nominally under the charge of the French "Engineer-in-Chief of Bridges and Highways, Amiens," but in point of fact were supervised by an Anglo-French sub-commission. This sub-commission carried out all repairs behind a line running approximately through corps headquarters, while the corps carried out repairs in front of the line.

"What an unnatural life we were living! Here were we, intelligent human beings (let us hope!), brought up to home comforts and decent, respectable pursuits and office life, living like savages, thinking only of our food and drink, our repose and safety. Here were we, presumably sane individuals all going mad with delight over a cracked harmonium in the middle of a wilderness in the same way that some French Moroccan troops were dancing to some reed instruments farther down in the valley." [1]

With the capture of the high ground in late September it seemed as though a change for the better were coming. But no, the weather broke; torrential rains flooded the battlefield. The ground grew to an impossible, soggy morass, with a slippery surface which proved many a man's undoing. The chalk and dust of the battlefield covered roads, tracks, everything, as though with vaseline. Artillery slipped and slithered in horrible fashion; teams went down and guns turned over. Drivers of all vehicles were frequently injured, if no worse.

Then, as soon as it began to dry again, the ground turned incredibly sticky; so much so that despatch riders proceeding by motor-cycle to Bazentin became fixed, and their despatches had to be taken on by mounted orderlies. The Grenadiers arrived at the trenches hours late, and had to explain to a sceptical battalion that their unheard-of unpunctuality was caused by the necessity to dig several men out of the mud.

Wounded Slowly Drown in Slime

The fate of the wounded who fell into the muddy holes and trenches scarcely bears thinking about. It is only too true that not a few poor wretches, injured and unable to move, slowly vanished into the slime, still shrieking for help. The labour of reaching the line exhausted the troops before they had fired a shot. Some battalions are said to have spent one whole day in advancing over a distance of five miles; and then the troops arrived at their destination worn out.

Mud on the Somme became almost as great a terror as the enemy's shell. It differed too, greatly, from that abomination of evil memory encountered in the valley of the Lys; it lacked the fluidity of the Flanders variety, but possessed an adhesive quality that was even more to be dreaded. It sucked down men and horses like a quicksand. "Duckboards" proved useless. In the end men and roads might disappear into the

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front*, p. 185.

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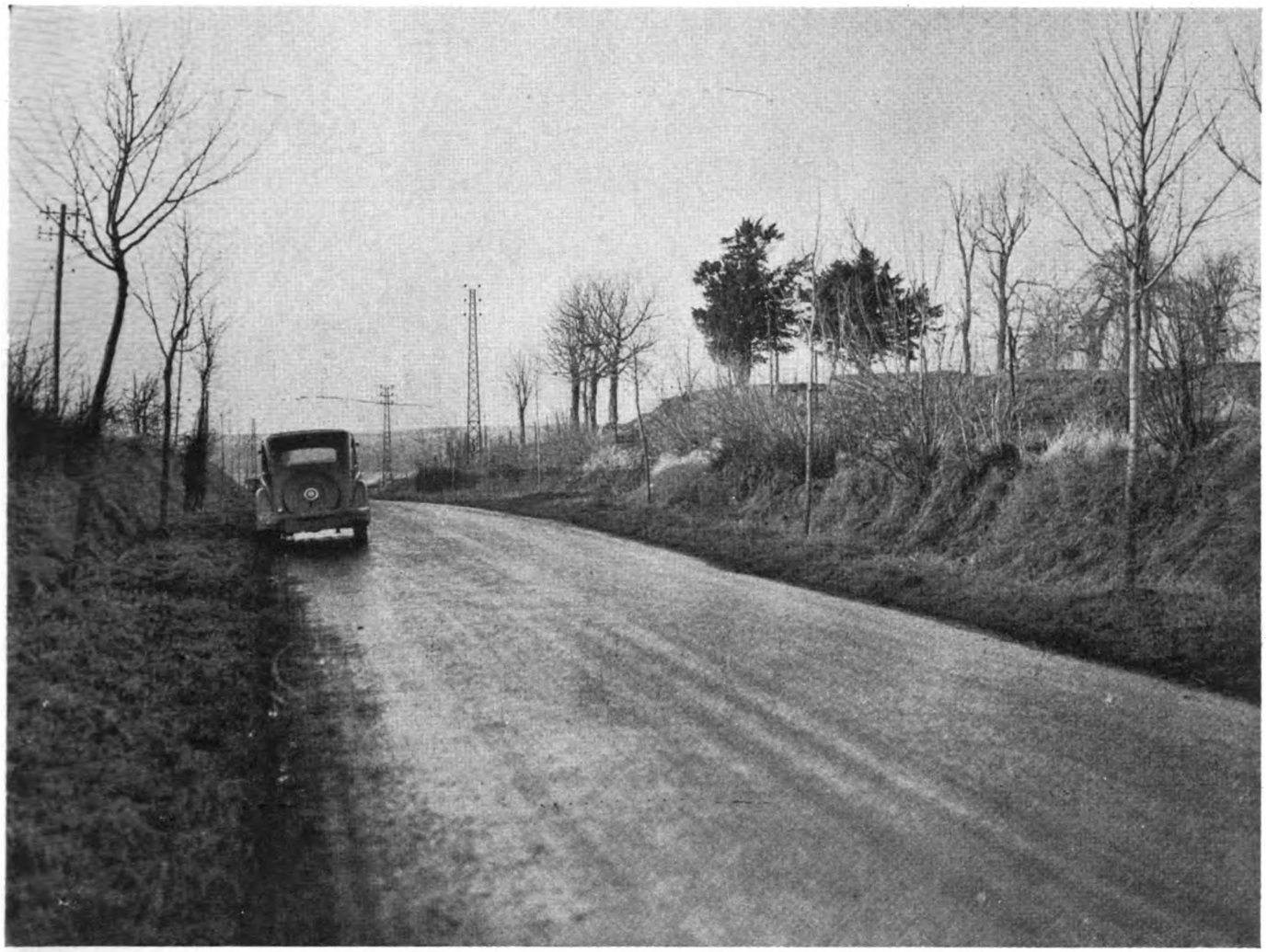

Photo: Keystone.

A PERFECT SURFACE

In peace-time the stone for the notably fine roads of northern France comes mainly from Belgium; but in 1916 it had to be fetched from regions south of the Somme, from Jersey, and even from Cornwall. In the whole Fourth Army area there was only one quarry, and that a poor one. A central commission at G.H.Q. supplied other stone, but transport, as well as the material itself, was always behind requirements. Road-gangs had to be content with "darning" the worst portions (as in the photograph opposite) during halts and blocks in the traffic. The above picture again shows a stretch of the Contay—Amiens highway.

awful morass, which grew and grew as the shell-holes multiplied.

"To retrieve the wounded from the festering quagmire . . . required four men, sometimes more, for each single stretcher; while, as they struggled beneath its weight, they sank often knee-deep in mud . . . The vast cavities of shell-holes filled with oozing slime almost as soon as the fury of the exploding metal had expended itself; and into these death-traps drivers hastening with ammunition to the guns, or struggling forward with limbers, would plunge their animals, lost beyond hope of recovery.

"The roads, which at the best of times were ill-founded, had long ceased to have any solid foundation. Into the deep mud which formed their surface, tree trunks and balks of timber were thrown to support the unceasing wheeled traffic. But, think with pity on the men who staggered and slithered, their feet often trapped between heavy sleepers, as the unseen road-bottom, on which they trod through twelve inches of slime, rocked and swayed beneath the weight of passing waggons! The agonies of the battlefield . . . were increased by a hundredfold by the exertions required in going up to the line, and in retreating therefrom. . . . These roads registered to an inch by the enemy artillery, were under incessant shell-fire, their scuppers and banks heaped with the corpses of mules and horses and with shattered waggons."[1]

Drinking Corpse-polluted Mud

And yet drinking-water might become a scarcity. It is told by a survivor how, maddened by thirst as he lay in a shell-hole, the spectacle of the dead men's water-bottles in the open worked on his imagination until, at the risk of his life, he crawled out to the blood-stained remains of a guardsman for the sake of the water-bottle. When at length he reached his goal, he found the water-bottle empty, pierced by a bullet. Such was his frenzy that he stood up to fire at the Germans; mercifully for him, however, a neighbouring shell-burst flung him back into a friendly shell-hole, where he drank and wallowed in the bloody water that already harboured one dead occupant.

But there were humorous results of the water shortage. A crisis arose in the *n*th Division when petrol was sent up to the front, in mistake for water, in two-gallon tins—not a diffi-

[1] Hutchison, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 107-8.

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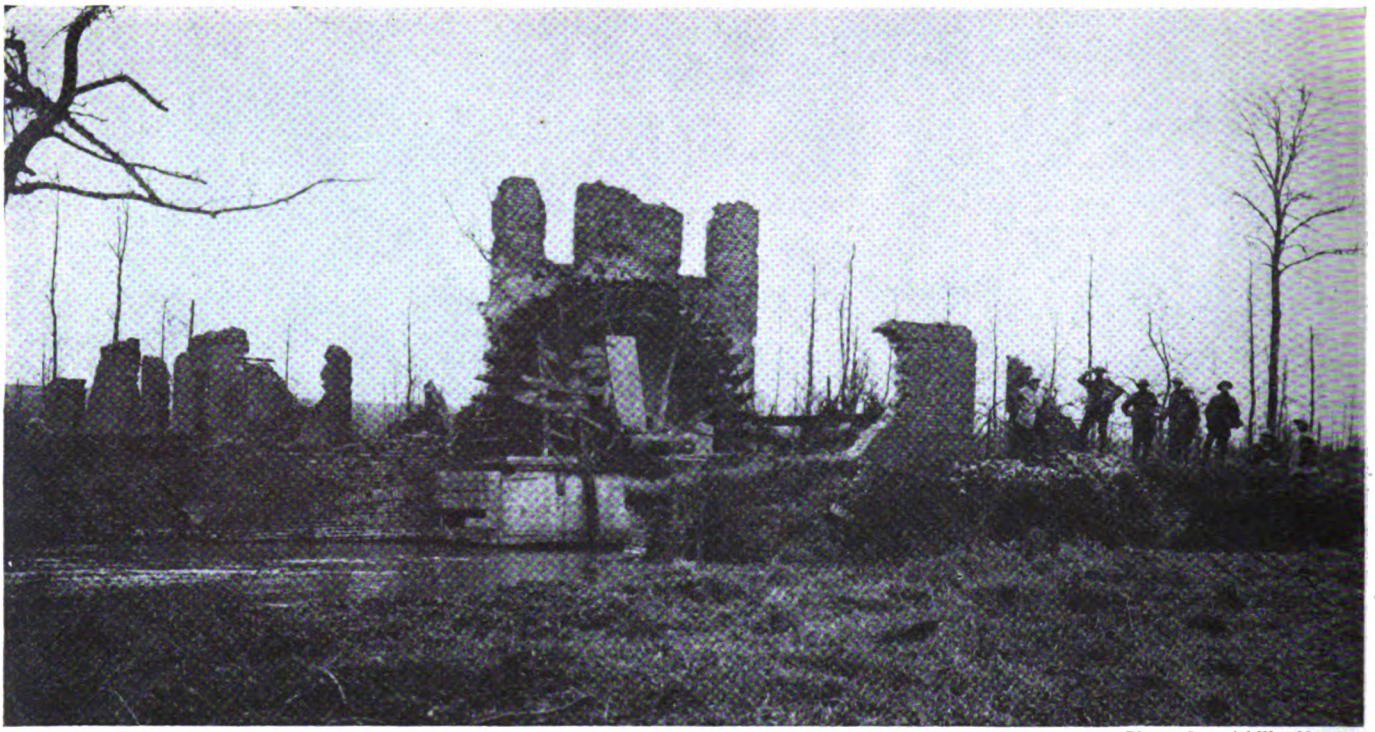

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

BESIDE THE WATER-MILL

St. Pierre-Divion, a tiny hamlet on the east bank of the Ancre opposite Hamel, and 7 km. almost due north of Albert, went through the mill during the War, like most of its neighbours ; and this photograph shows how shells went—literally, this time—through its own mill. In face of this village our main front of attack in the First Battle of the Somme reached its northernmost limit. Thence northward as far as Serre, inclusive, the enemy's trenches were assaulted merely to occupy his artillery and hold his reserves.

Photo : Keystone.

—AND NOW

Let it be said quite honestly that this scene may or may not be the site of the old mill shown in the upper picture. The mill, completely erased by November, 1918, has never been rebuilt, and no present-day inhabitant of St. Pierre-Divion seems to remember its precise location. In the first Somme battle the enemy held out in this hamlet until November 13th, when the position was taken after a bombardment lasting two days. In the area of the attack the 39th Division took nearly 1,400 prisoners—a number exceeding that of the attacking troops !

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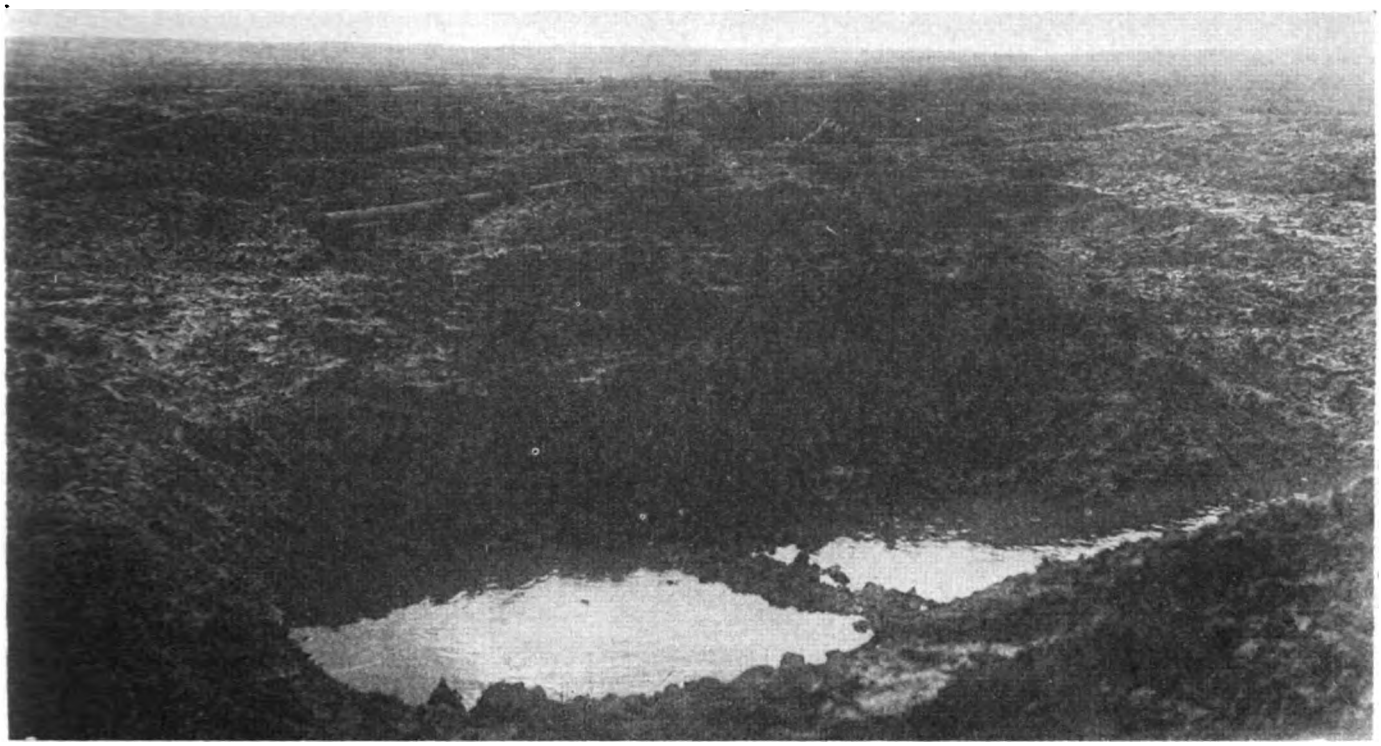

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTERMATH

The east-to-west width of the Somme battlefield is nearly 40 miles, and not once, but three times, was the huge area swept by the tide of battles such as the world had never previously seen. Small wonder if even the first tide left that flat, rich, rolling country of the Somme and the Ancre, the Cologne and the Omignon, a waste almost primæval in its utter lifelessness. The above photograph was taken "on a wet afternoon" in December, 1916, and reflects the appalling conditions prevailing.

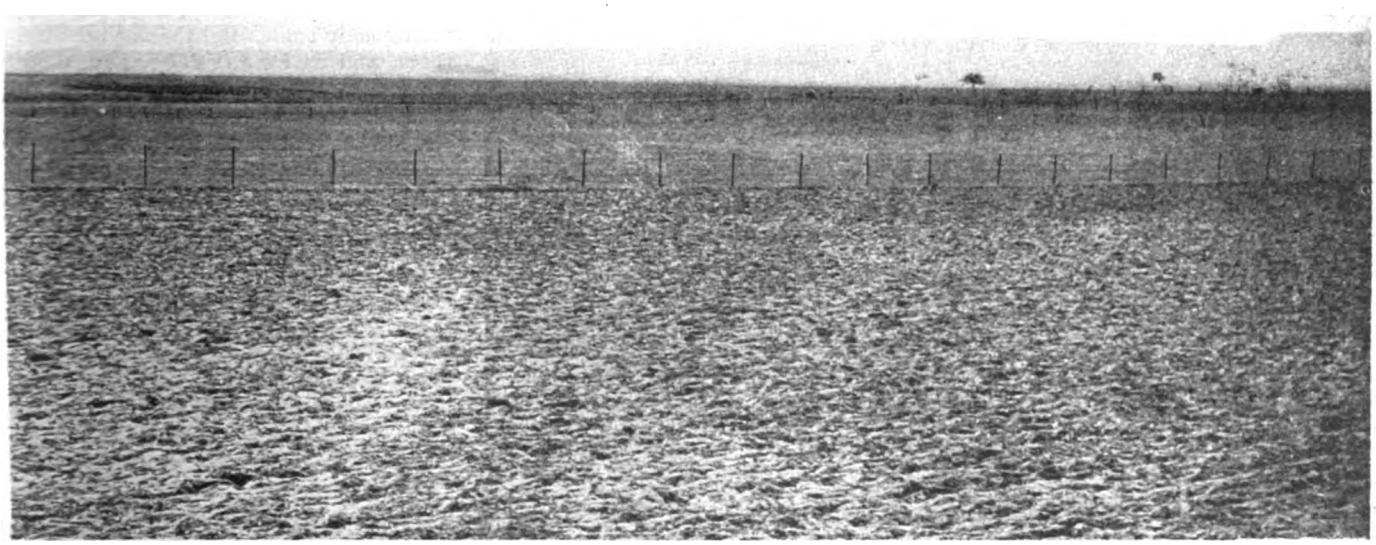

Photo: Keystone.

WHERE MANY DIED

So strikingly desolate are these Somme fields, that they might be draped in mourning for the sights which they witnessed just over, and again just under, twenty years ago. The "trade" in scrap-metal dug up from these bleak expanses is said by those who ply it to be no longer a commercial proposition; yet it is still practised, and in the ploughing season there passes scarce a day without some dismal fragment coming to the surface. Every now and then, too, a live shell comes to light, and explodes. . . . There are casualties still on the Somme.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE MEN WITH THE CORKSCREWS

This is not a toper's dream, but a wiring-party going forward with the implements of its trade at the outset of the Battle of Morval, 25th—28th September, 1916. The introduction of the Tank exercised a considerable bearing on the efficacy of barbed wire, since one Tank could speedily flatten out a wide expanse.

cult thing to do, seeing that every liquid except rum might be conveyed in these familiar receptacles. Thereupon a visiting celebrity of high authority was presented with a large whisky and petrol—to the everlasting damnation of the said division. Hardly less serious was the result next day when the same liquid was employed in trying to extinguish a fire due to a bursting Primus stove in a luxurious captured dug-out, all held up by timber joists. The latter were utterly burned, and the magnificent shelter crashed in.

Then there were the minor plagues of war: insects of all kinds—flies, fleas, lice, bugs. What misery they could cause! Many a Highlander may remember trying to clear the pests from the pleats of his kilt by means of a heated skewer; how the gorged vermin would respond to contact with the hot metal with a satisfying and just audible *pop*!

Dogs, Cats, and Rats

But of other and more pleasant animals there were not many sorts. To the surprise of the troops, countless dogs, recognising neither master nor homes, wandered about the battlefield. They were of all kinds; some, real aristocrats, pedigree animals, would gladly come and receive food. But they rarely came again, for they had adopted a roving, anxious life, and would exhibit every symptom of helpless terror at the sound of shell bursting nearby. Yet dogs can be the bravest of animals. Here they seemed to revert to primitive type, and would often be seen wandering about in pairs.

Cats, on the other hand, seemed far less perturbed by the sounds and signs of battle. Whenever the occupation of any quarter assumed some degree of permanency, there cats would be found, seemingly quite contented and at home, almost impervious to the chaos around. It was strange to note how oblivious these animals remained to that plague of trench life, namely rats. These vermin abounded: beastly, lean, mangy, often partly bald. But the cats ignored them, and as for the dogs, they were never there when they might have been needed to deal with them; moreover, they feared the front line. Not so the rats!

Of wild animals there were next to none, except birds; and most of these migrated farther back, where they were plentiful enough. Up in front, too, there were pigeons, but only such carrier-pigeons as would be brought there. Poor creatures! Many of them were buried alive in their baskets, and many more, when released, would be killed or gassed. But they could be faithful unto death, as witness the well-known "V.C." pigeon now reposing, stuffed, in a London Museum. And who has not heard the tale of that pigeon which, soon after an attack had been launched, was seen coming back to the loft at a corps headquarters where news was anxiously awaited. Great was the excitement among the staff as

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A FIELD CANTEEN

New Zealand troops purchasing stores from a field canteen on the Amiens—Albert road, September, 1916. The canteens, both those known as Expeditionary Force Canteens and others run by the Y.M.C.A., were a godsend to the troops on the various fronts. Latterly they were able to supply almost anything in reason and at keen prices. The Expeditionary Force Canteen did not materialise until 1915. By 1918 there were 295 canteens in France alone, with a staff exceeding 5,000.

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ALONG THE SOMME

Then and Now

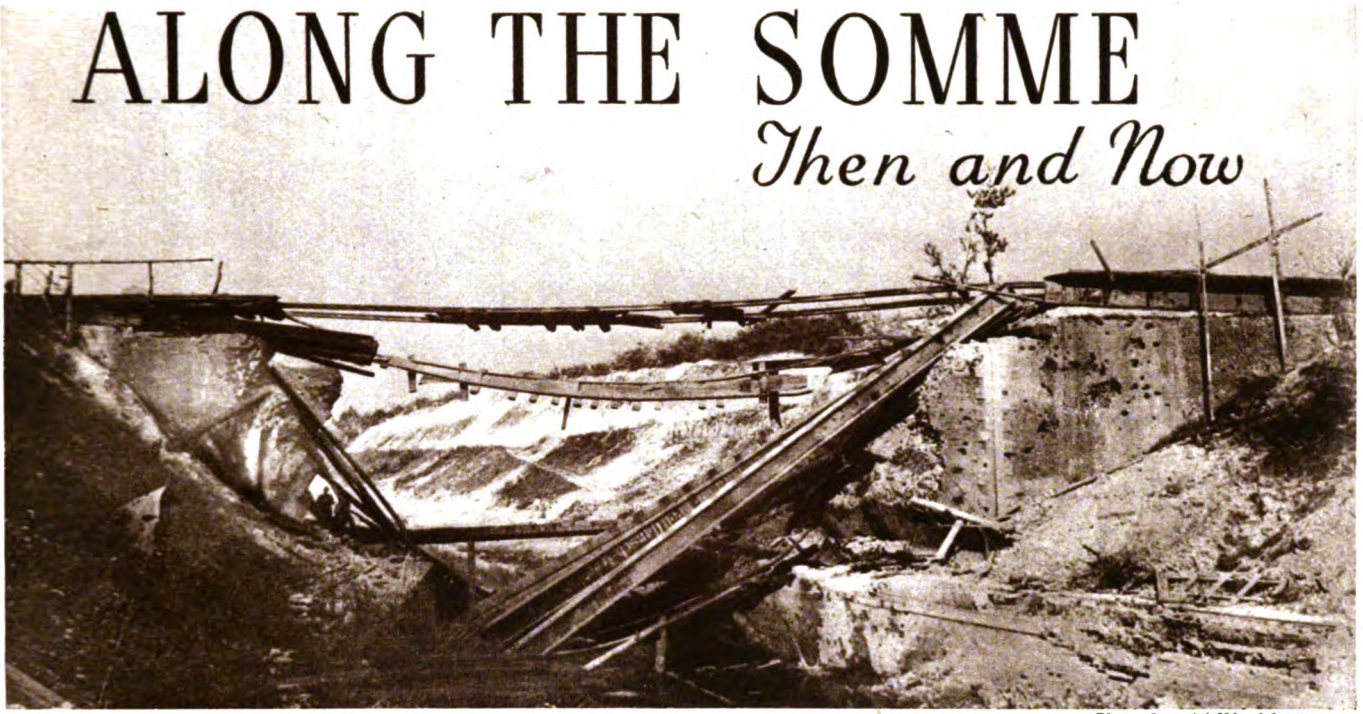

Photo: Imperial War Museum

BLOWN UP

The scene of this untidy-looking mess is Froissy, a minute hamlet on the Somme a few kilometres due south of Bray. Bray itself, as some readers may recall, stands on the north bank of the river at the apex of a northward detour in its course. The Somme Canal, which for the most part runs slightly south of the river-bed, cuts off this detour altogether; and it is midway along the short cut afforded by the canal that Froissy is to be found. The bridge shown here was photographed on August 24th, 1918.

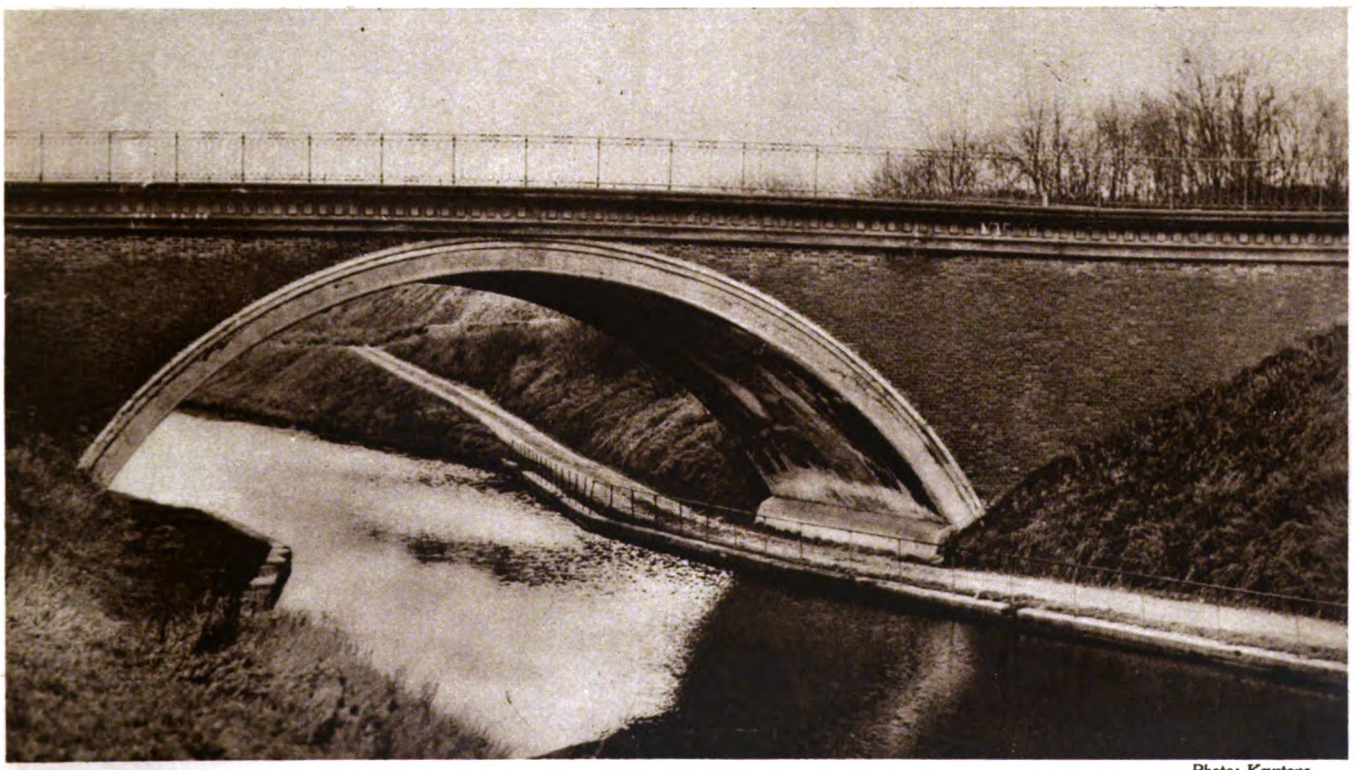

Photo: Keystone

BUILT UP

The railway here crossing the Somme Canal is the Albert—Bray—Chuignolles line, which joins the main Albert—Laon, etc., line at Rosières. There is also a road-bridge at Froissy, carrying the Albert—Rosières—Montdidier highway. It was, naturally enough, the policy of the Germans in retreat before our final offensive to destroy as many bridges as possible, and already the "Then and Now" pictures in this work have shown several so damaged—and rebuilt. The war-time illustration in this pair is an Australian photograph.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum

PRISONERS IN SAILLY-LAURETTE

Sailly-Laurette stands on the north bank of the river near Sailly-le-Sec, and is some 10 km. south of Albert. It is perhaps most notable for having witnessed the happy ending to an amazing adventure (briefly recounted in the lower caption on this page) which befell three Irish battalions of the 16th Division during the March Retreat of 1918. Above we see a batch of German prisoners on its way back from the line, passing R.A.M.C. stretcher-bearers on their way up there, August 8th, 1918.

Photo: Keystone

HORSES IN SAILLY-LAURETTE

Late on March 27th, 1918, the three Irish battalions above referred to, which had been stubbornly holding their positions near Méricourt all day, suddenly realized that they were completely isolated. Waiting until dark, they marched to the bridge over the Somme north of Méricourt: it was strongly held by Germans. Turning along the tow-path to Cérizy, they surprised the picquet on that bridge and rushed it. They were now in enemy country, on the hostile side of the Somme. However, no one expected them, and they marched along the enemy tow-path to Sailly-Laurette. Here they rushed—from behind—another German picquet, recrossed the river, and arrived safely in our lines near Hamel.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

CHIPILLY ONE SUMMER

When our great offensive began on August 8th, 1918, the elaborate—and indeed unprecedented—precautions taken to deceive the enemy completely succeeded. The Germans were dumbfounded, having expected—precisely as we had intended—that our next push would be delivered in the First Army area, far to the north. Our artillery pinned down the enemy guns while our tanks and infantry advanced, and our first objectives were gained with ease. Chipilly is here shown as it looked when taken on August 9th.

Photo: Keystone

CHIPILLY ONE WINTER

By the evening of August 8th, 1918, we had advanced, south of the Somme, from 6 to 7 miles. But north of the river the Germans were more alert, as the result of recent engagements in this area, and managed to hold their ground at Chipilly for a number of hours. In a manner of speaking this was the last definite check which we received, for after the 58th (London) Division and a regiment of the 33rd American Division had captured the village, there seemed nothing left to stem our advance, which swept right on without a break until November 11th. Notice, in this photograph, the unusual and rather moving design of the British memorial; also the rebuilt roofs compared with those of Sailly-Laurette.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

DURING THE MARCH RETREAT

It was hereabouts that, after the enemy's great thrust on March 21st and 22nd, 1918, General Gough wisely decided to withdraw his men, rather than break their hearts and throw away the lives of many by compelling them to fight, dead-tired, a virtually hopeless action. The British troops concerned had already been subjected to forty-eight hours of strenuous battle, while the enemy were comparatively fresh and could draw upon plentiful reserves. This picture shows Tommies on the river-bank near Péronne on March 23rd, 1918.

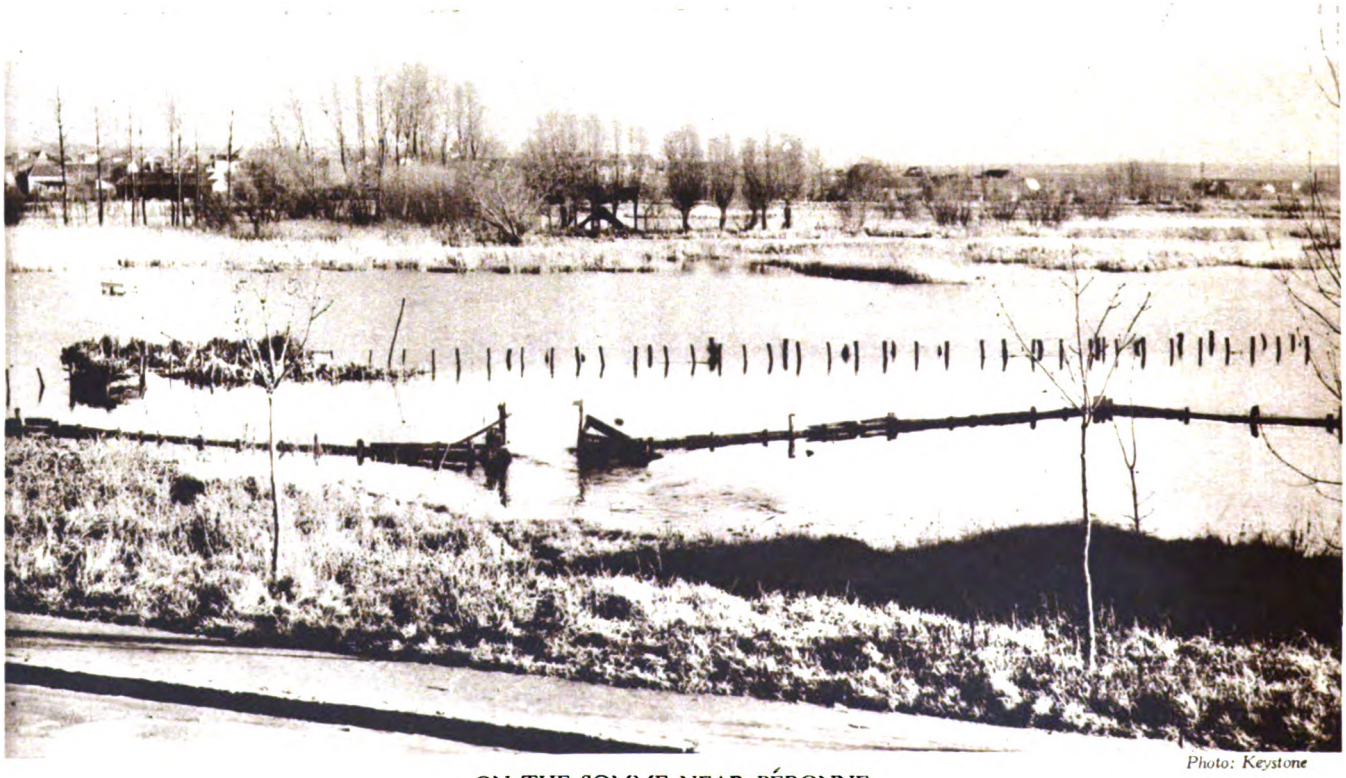

Photo: Keystone

ON THE SOMME NEAR PÉRONNE

Although it has taken twenty years to bring about the complete exoneration of General Gough, together with a fit recognition of his admirable conduct in the matter of the March Retreat, many of the facts now alleged to be coming to light for the first time were appreciated even before the Retreat began by our troops on the spot. It is unfortunate that the censor was obliged to delete many a revealing passage in letters home, which would otherwise have endorsed fully the subsequently spoken word.

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the message was carefully unwound. It read: "I am fed up with carrying this ruddy bird!"

Hare- and Pheasant-hunting

There is also a tale told by the 12th Gloucestershires to the effect that, when halted under cover of a bank on September 25th near Morval, a large hare came racing across from the German lines. Suddenly, on seeing the troops, it swung inwards, between two companies lying down in line. Desperate efforts were made to secure the wretched animal, but they all failed. Rumour had it, however, that the hare fell a victim to the reserve company, and found its way into the stewpot.

Of a like nature is the story told of a party of officers who went pheasant-shooting in a wood near Guillemont, wherein the miserable birds had taken refuge. There they actually secured some birds—with their revolvers, so it is said! Anyhow, it was not long before the Germans proceeded to put down a violent barrage on the wood. The pheasant-shooting party was thus rudely broken up, and all the birds sought safety elsewhere.

A strange world it all was! A nightmare—"the product of a disordered brain following a surfeit of lobster mayonnaise," as a survivor once described his experiences. Yet it had some little compensation, for if the army had swallowed men's lives, it had some power to mould their characters, as witness this verdict:

"Our careers, our civilian prospects and what brains we once possessed were—to use a poetical phrase—being borne away on the wings of Time. Many of the men had lost their positions at the outbreak of the War; for two years they had not received a penny more than their Army pay. They had got to start all over again when this Armageddon was over, like boys just leaving school, with whom they would be in competition. Some of them were married, their wives existing on the miserable separation allowance at home. All sorts and conditions of men were here, some with little cause to worry and others with plenty of excuses for pessimism, yet all were rubbing along decidedly cheerfully.

Mutual Understanding

"For our section was like one big family, and in these months of close acquaintanceship we got to KNOW each other as men had never done before the War. Everyone's character, will-power, nerve, generosity, and general peculiarities came to be known little by little, and this deep understanding of other men was compensating a great deal for being deprived of business opportunities, though we did not appreciate this at the time. The War was revealing qualities in ourselves and others which we had not known to exist, and was building up character in everybody." [1]

[1] *Four Years on the Western Front*, p. 185.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ARTILLERYMEN AT OVILLERS

British artillerymen in bivouac at Ovillers during the closing week of September, 1916. The battles of 1916 were fought under an entirely new arrangement of British artillery, drastic re-organisation having been effected in March, with a further (and final) adjustment of the heavy artillery some time later. Rapid growth was the cause of these changes.

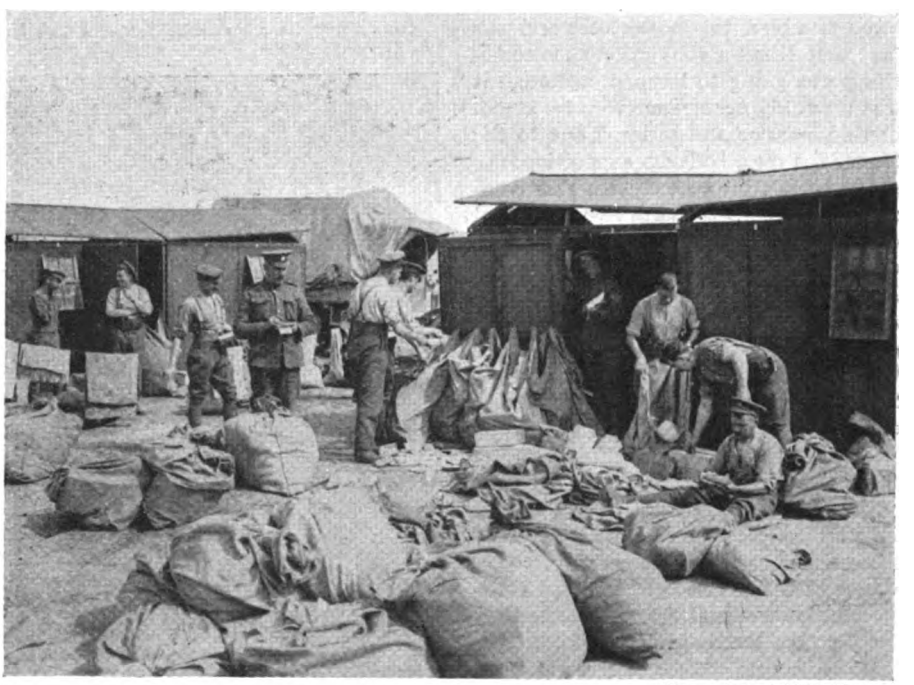

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SORTING THE MAIL

A busy scene photographed in September, 1916, near Dernancourt. It is an exceptionally fine tribute to the postal organisation of the B.E.F. that, during the four years of turmoil on the Western Front, the loss of army mails, whether by accident or by action of the enemy, occurred on only thirteen occasions. When one considers the quantities of mail handled, this is amazing indeed.

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CHAPTER XLVIII

MEMORIES IX.—AT JUTLAND WITH THE BATTLE-CRUISERS

The author of this chapter in his concluding paragraph remarks that "historians will argue for a long, long while about the Battle of Jutland." He is right! They will! It is to be doubted whether they will ever arrive at a conclusion. Anything, therefore, in the way of personal reminiscence that tends to throw fresh light upon the mystery sea-battle of the Great War is welcome to most folk. This account of Jutland views the struggle as it appeared from one of Beatty's light cruisers.

On May 30th, 1916, I was Officer of the Day in H.M.S. *Southampton*, the flagship of the Second Light Cruiser Squadron, one of the three scouting forces attached to the Battle-cruiser Force. Our Chief was David Beatty, who flew his flag in the *Lion*. At about 3 p.m., whilst lying in Rosyth Harbour, a general signal was made to raise steam with all dispatch.

A Presentiment of Trouble

It was clear that a "stunt" of some kind was imminent. A friend of mine was in the hospital-ship *Maine*, convalescing from having his tonsils out, and I sent a note across to him telling him that it looked as if we were off for a show, and if he didn't want to miss it, he had better try to get back to the ship. I cannot explain why I should have troubled to do this, beyond the fact that I had a conviction that something was going to happen, although it was a weekly occurrence to raise steam in this manner and proceed out to the North Sea on a fruitless expedition.

My friend, impressed with this communication, escaped from the hospital ship, and within twenty-four hours we were both agreeing that glorious though it might be to die for one's country in battle, there were certain attractions about hospital-ships.

The whole Battle-cruiser Force sailed that night and proceeded eastward. At about half-past-two next afternoon the alarm was sounded. I went to my action station, which was in the after-control position of the ship, and heard that a light cruiser of one of the other scouting groups, some 30 or 40 miles away, was in action with German light forces. Half-an-hour later we sighted our old enemies, the German Battle-cruiser Squadron.

Both Battle-cruiser Forces turned south and began a long-range duel. We had with us four battleships of the *Queen Elizabeth* class, but as their speed was only 25 knots, they were not much use at this stage of the proceedings. The sea was calm, and though a light haze lay on the horizon, visibility was about 15,000 yards.

The *Southampton*, followed by her three consorts, the *Birmingham*, *Dublin*, and *Lowestoft*, was now about one mile ahead of the line, and from this position we had a perfect view of the proceedings. Behind us our own battle-cruisers tore along at 28 knots, white bones in their teeth, surrounded by columns of water from the German shells, and spurting flame and smoke from their turrets.

An Eye-witness of Disaster

Away to the eastward sharp dabs of flame spurted out from the misty horizon, where one could just distinguish the shapes of the German vessels.

Suddenly, an appalling disaster smote the British force. The *Indefatigable*, struck by a salvo, disappeared in an immense column of grey-black smoke, the base of which glowed like a fiery furnace, whilst flames flickered at its summit. I caught a glimpse of the *Indefatigable* lying on her side, and then she was no more.

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

OF THE ADMIRAL BREED
Meet Peggy, the mascot (one of many) belonging to H.M.S. *Iron Duke* on the eve of the Battle of Jutland. On the back of the original print is written: "A mother of 10 or 11 pups—and lost the lot in a less number of days."

At half-past-four the *Queen Mary* met with instant destruction. Once again (I was watching her through glasses at the time) I saw a salvo strike this great ship. There was a colossal column of fiery smoke, and in an instant the greater part of 1,300 men had disappeared into Eternity. So complete and rapid was the destruction of this ship that her successor in the line (H.M.S. *Tiger*) passed clean over the *Queen Mary's* grave without encountering any obstruction, although less than a minute elapsed between the explosion in the *Queen Mary* and the arrival at that spot of the *Tiger*.

It was at this juncture in the battle that David Beatty, on the bridge of the *Lion*, turned to a member of his staff and made the observation, already recorded: "There seems to be something wrong with our —— ships to-day."

Up to this point in the action all the advantage had been with the Germans. We had lost two battle-cruisers, and though our destroyers had attacked the enemy's line, it was doubtful whether very much damage had been done to either by gun-fire or by torpedoes. At this juncture a most dramatic event occurred. From the bridge of our ship we were electrified to see coming into sight on our port bow a long line of German battleships, steaming north to the assistance of their battle-cruisers.

It was the whole High Sea Fleet, and faced with this overwhelming force, our battle-cruisers and the Fifth Battle Squadron immediately turned north in order to fall back towards our battle-fleet, which had left Scapa Flow and was hurrying south to our assistance.

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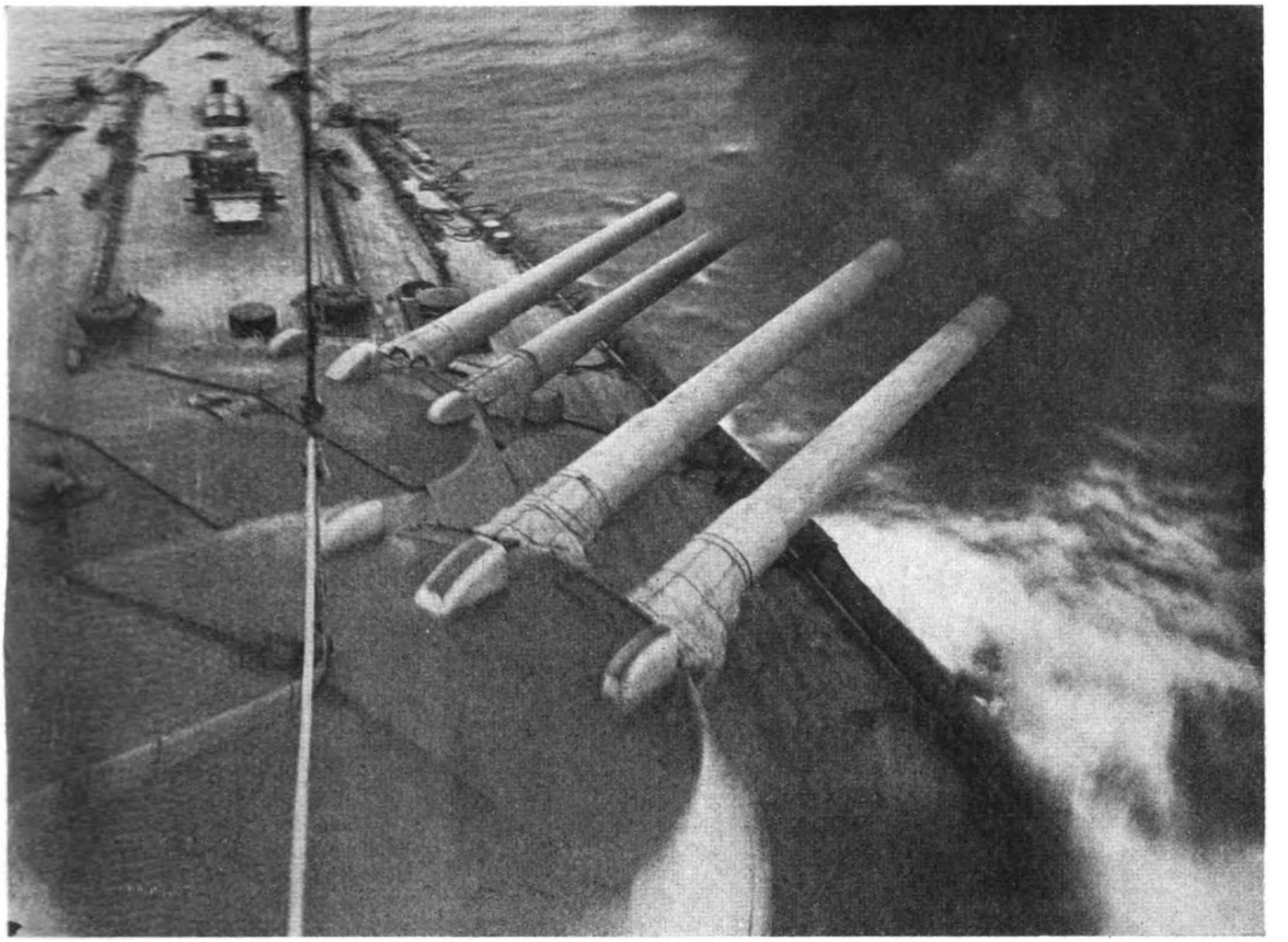

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

FIRING A SALVO

With her decks cleared for action, the ill-fated H.M.S. *Queen Mary* is here seen firing a broadside from her 13·5-inch guns. This vessel, whose fate at the hands of the *Derfflinger* will be recalled, was a battle-cruiser of the *Lion* type, built by Palmers, of Jarrow, and launched in 1912. Her displacement was 27,000 tons, and her armament consisted of eight 13·5-inch and sixteen 4-inch guns. A unit of Beatty's First Battle-cruiser Squadron, she had been at Rosyth just before the Battle of Jutland.

Dignity and Impudence

We continued on our course in order to make a thorough reconnaissance of the enemy. The long line of some 17 battleships preserved a dignified silence as we impudently advanced towards them. One could almost imagine these great ships saying: "What on earth are these silly little light cruisers doing, rushing towards their own destruction?"

"Thirteen thousand yards—twelve thousand five hundred—twelve thousand—eleven thousand—ten thousand five hundred yards . . ." so the voice came from our chief range-finder. As he said the last figure, a flicker of flame ran down the German line. They had decided to put up with our impudence no longer. The four of us put our helms hard over, and the whole squadron was in the act of turning as a shower of 11-inch projectiles fell amongst us.

Then for an hour we zigzagged like snipe, as we dodged and twisted and turned on our northward course in order to avoid the shelling to which we were being subjected by the German battle-fleet. It was an unpleasant hour, as we could not fire back at the enemy. Moreover, we knew that if one of these enormous shells which kept on falling on either side of us were to hit the ship, we should lie in a helpless condition and merely act as a target for 17 battleships.

The Fifth Battle Squadron, just ahead of us, which was engaged with twelve German heavy ships, was firing steadily, and, so far as one could judge, with considerable effect, at the head of the German line. Suddenly the *Warspite*, struck by a shell near her steering-gear, turned out of the line, and to our horror and amazement steamed straight at the German Fleet.

She persisted on this amazing course until she was only 8,000 yards from the centre of the German line. By this time every gun that the enemy could bring to bear on the helpless vessel was being concentrated on her, and she was almost invisible in a forest of splashes. I remember focussing her on the screen of my reflex camera, but so certain was I that she would blow up at any moment that I could not bring myself to press the button.

A Lucky Escape

However, to the amazement of friend and foe, she suddenly made another circle (her steering-gear had once more been got under control), and lashing out viciously with her 15-inch guns,

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safely regained the shelter of the British line.

It was just about this time that the whole Grand Fleet, the most imposing armada of armoured ships which had ever sailed the seas, appeared in sight to the northward. I do not propose to write here of the complicated questions of deployment, of the confusion which was caused by the fact that the Battle-cruiser Force had to move across the whole front of the British Fleet, of the destruction which overtook the *Defence*, flying the flag of the gallant Sir Robert Arbuthnot, and of all that vast and unending controversy which has grown up between the so-called Jellicoe and Beatty schools of thought. I will summarise it all by saying that the arrival on the scene of the Grand Fleet was as unexpected and disturbing to the Germans as the appearance, some two hours earlier, of the German High Sea Fleet had been startling to us of the Battle-cruiser Squadron.

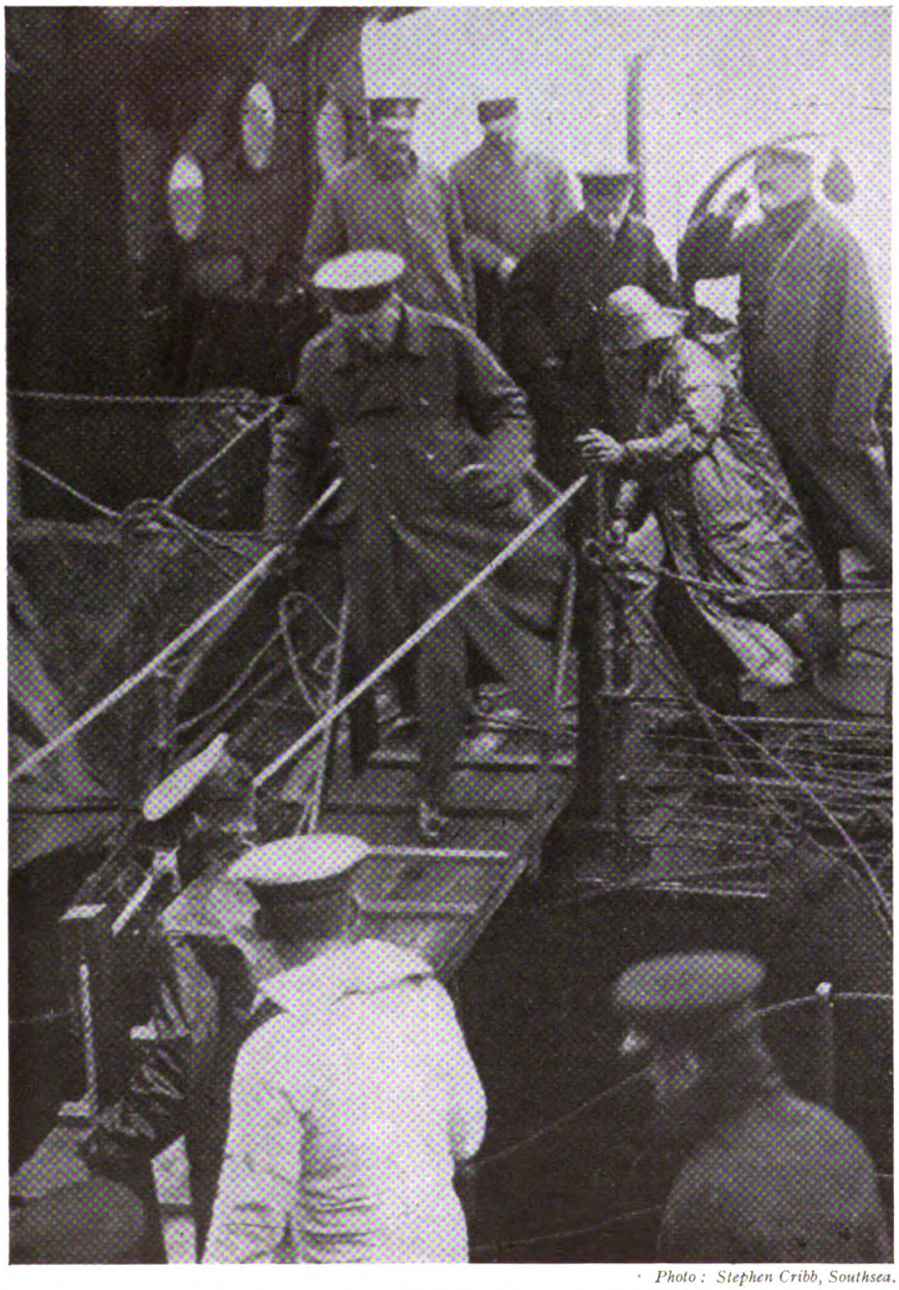

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF LORD KITCHENER

The month of June, 1916, ushered in to the sullen rumble of the naval guns at Jutland and passing amidst the roar of the Somme bombardment, was destined to mark the death of Lord Kitchener. The Secretary of State for War, proceeding on a mission to Russia, went down with H.M.S. *Hampshire* on the 5th of that month. He is seen here boarding the *Iron Duke* shortly before returning to his destroyer for the *Hampshire*. Colonel Fitzgerald is standing on deck directly behind Lord Kitchener.

Finding himself half surrounded by overwhelming forces, the German commander-in-chief executed a masterly manœuvre under the combined cover of a smoke-screen and a tremendous torpedo attack by his flotillas on the British battle-fleet. Von Scheer was able to extricate himself from the ring of fire in which he was being enclosed, but only at the cost of steering to the westward. This enabled the British Fleet to place itself between the Germans and their base in the Heligoland Bight.

That was the position as dusk closed down on a sea whose surface was calm, but whose bosom heaved in an uneasy swell caused by the rushing passage of some 200 vessels, most of which were moving at about 25 knots. Over the whole scene hung a thick pall of smoke, through which an occasional shaft of light from the setting sun was indistinguishable from the glow of burning and sinking ships.

Acting as Rearguard

The second phase of the battle had ended. The *Southampton* was untouched. Our ordeal had yet to come.

At about 10.15 p.m., the German forces had disappeared somewhere into the darkness to the west. The British battle-fleet, preceded by the battle-cruisers, was steering to the south in the general direction of Heligoland, in order to make sure of keeping between the Germans and their base. Three or four miles astern of the British battle-fleet came the Second Light Cruiser Squadron as a rearguard force. Of this squadron the *Southampton* was the leader. The British destroyer flotillas had been sent to the west of us to seek out and attack the German battle-fleet.

That was the situation when at 10.20 p.m. we observed from the *Southampton* five light cruisers steaming on a course parallel with our own; they were without lights, and distant 800 yards. Were they friend or foe? So far as one could make out from their silhouettes, they closely resembled the British Third Light Cruiser Squadron; and the events of the day had left the situation so confused that it was impossible to tell from the "plot" on the bridge the exact position of all our own squadrons.

For some minutes both groups of ships proceeded on parallel courses. It is now known that the strangers were as uncertain of our identity as we were of theirs. We knew that if we chal-

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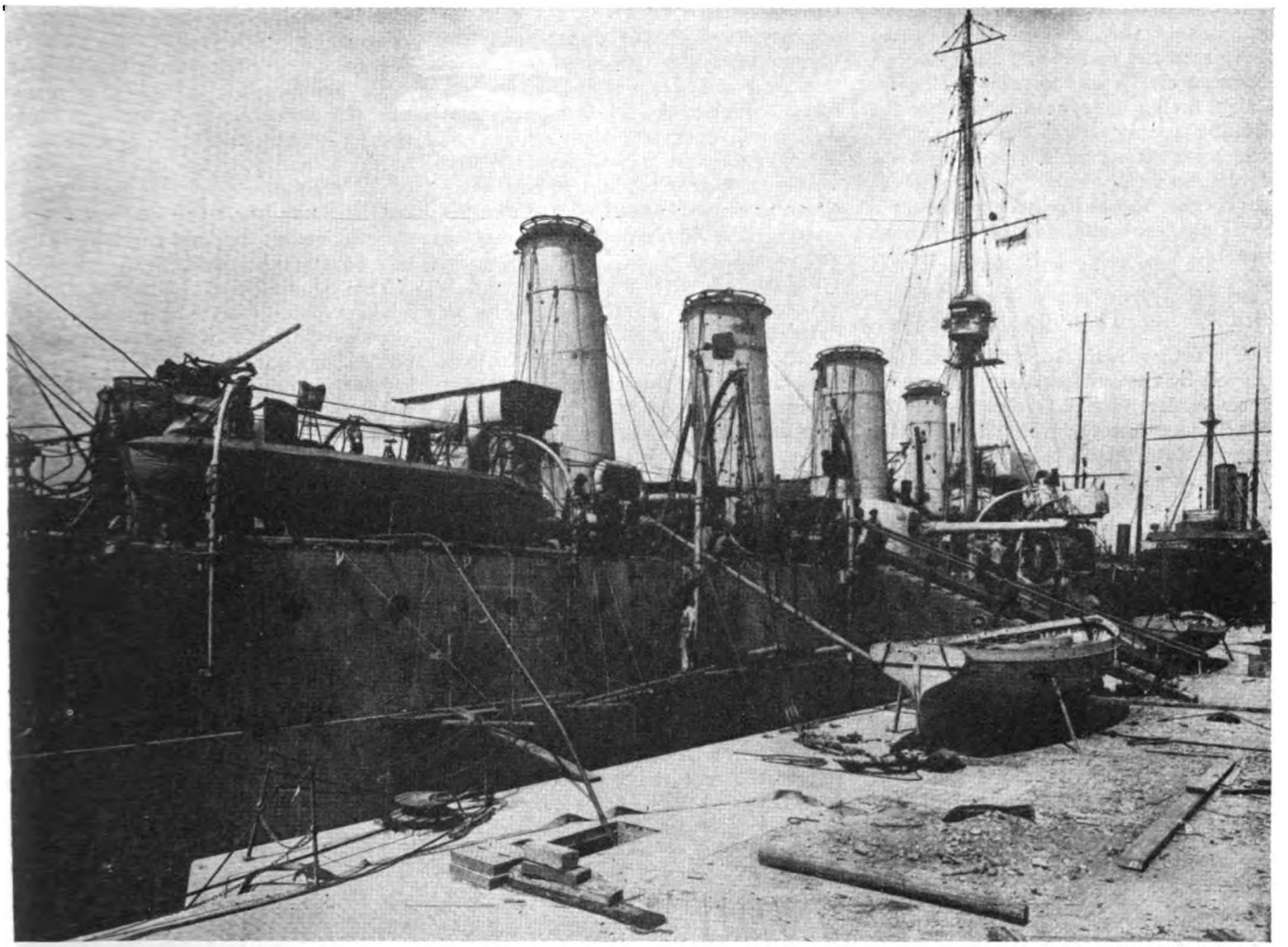

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

H.M.S. *SOUTHAMPTON* AFTER JUTLAND

A port-side view, looking aft, of the light cruiser on which Commander King-Hall served in the Jutland battle. The photograph was taken shortly after the vessel had returned home, and shows some of the damage which she received in the engagement. It will be recalled that it was the *Southampton*, under Commodore Goodenough, which at 4.33 p.m. on May 31st, 1916, sighted the enemy High Sea Fleet on the open sea—a spectacle which no British seaman had witnessed since the War began.

lenged them, and they turned out to be German, the reply would consist of a salvo of high-explosive shells.

I was in the after-gun-control position, and was in the act of telephoning to the gunnery lieutenant, who was up by the foremast, and giving him my opinion that the strangers were Germans, when the leading unknown vessel suddenly switched on several coloured electric lights. This was evidently an action signal, since a few seconds later every searchlight which could bear on us—to the total of about twenty—was switched on, and we, as the leading ship, suddenly came under fire at point-blank range from at least four of the enemy vessels.

A Hail of Shells

I have never felt so conspicuous in my life. The effect was simply devastating, since, as we were a light cruiser, all our guns were on the upper deck, and the guns' crews were exposed save for such protection as was afforded by a gun-shield.

We had opened fire to the best of our ability, but such a hail of shells fell upon us from a range at which it was impossible to miss, that in about two minutes most of the guns' crews on our engaged side were wiped out. Since all the communications were cut between my control position and the guns in the after part of the ship, I left the after control and went down to the after guns.

As I reached this place a salvo of shells burst all round me, and I had a vague impression of a large object passing just over my head. I found out next day that it was a searchlight, weighing about half a ton. One of the shells exploded in a heap of cordite, which went off with a sizzling roar, taking with it my eyebrows.

There were about 23 men in the after part of the ship, and I feel I am right in saying that I was the only person there neither killed nor wounded. Looking forward, I saw a spectacle which filled me with alarm. The ship was on fire in two places; in both cases the flames were about 50 or 60 feet high, and it seemed inevitable that she would blow up at any moment.

Meanwhile, I put my head down a hatch and called for assistance to deal with the fire which was raging in the after part. The wardroom wine-steward rushed up the ladder with a hose, leading a miscellaneous party of cooks and odds and ends, who were part of a first-aid group.

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There is no doubt that a very few minutes of this kind of thing would have seen the end of the *Southampton*. Fortunately our torpedo-lieutenant, Allen, fired a high-speed torpedo at the leading enemy ship (the *Frauenlob*), which struck her amidships so that she broke in half. There were only 35 survivors, who drifted all night on a raft and eventually reached the Danish coast.

Staggering Through the Night

The other four German ships, dismayed by the sudden disappearance of their leader, fortunately came to the conclusion that they had accidentally bumped into British battle-cruisers, and turned sharply away and broke off the action.

We staggered on through the night, burning in several places, and with our upper deck thick with dead and wounded men. One of our own squadron, mistaking us for an enemy ship, put a six-inch shell into our disengaged side at a range of 300 yards; but one more or less didn't seem to make very much difference in our rather battered condition.

Then came the dreadful business of trying to clear up the ship and deal with the wounded. About 75 per cent. of our personnel on the upper deck had become casualties. Some of them were terribly burned. Our two doctors performed wonderful work in a stuffy and inadequate operating-room which was normally the stokers' bathroom. Whilst I was in there, holding a man's leg which was being cut off, a bottle of ether burst. This did not make the operation any easier.

By degrees we improvised communications, plugged up the shot-holes in our side, and generally made such preparations as would enable us to give some account of ourselves in the event of our meeting other enemy ships. I now know, from investigations into the German archives which I had to make when I was at the Admiralty after the War, that about an hour after this action two German battle-cruisers passed within half-a-mile of us. A very narrow squeak. We found that mattresses and blankets were useful for plugging holes on the water-line.

Twenty-four hours later we were back in Rosyth harbour. Such extraordinary stories about the battle had received currency in Great Britain that when our postman went ashore to get the mail, he was booed by the crowd.

After-history of the *Southampton*

It took six weeks to repair the damage to the *Southampton*, at the end of which time she was once more fit for sea. This wonderful little ship continued to serve in the Grand Fleet for the remainder of the War, after which she was flagship on the South American station; then she was broken up, and there is now a new *Southampton* in the Navy List.

The Union Jack (complete with genuine shot-holes) which the *Southampton* of the Great War flew as her battle flag during the Battle of Jutland, is now in a treasured position in my house in Hampshire. I found the flag, after the action, lying in a pool of water and blood. Part of our mast had been shot down, and the flag came with it.

Historians will argue for a long, long while about the Battle of Jutland. Both sides made mistakes, and, if I may say so, both sides fought with considerable gallantry and tenacity. Let us hope that the lives lost in this great Fleet action were not laid down in vain, and that in the years to come people will be able to say that the Great War, of which the Battle of Jutland was one of the most dramatic episodes, did indeed prove to be the " war to end war."

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

THE AFTERMATH OF JUTLAND

A group of seamen and marines, all wounded in the Battle of Jutland, photographed during a private tea-party held in their honour near the Royal Naval Hospital, Gosport, where the men were convalescing. Our casualties in the great engagement amounted to 6,014 killed and 674 wounded, as against the enemy's 2,400 and 400 respectively. Losses in ships totalled 14 on our side, 11 on the German. Four V.C.'s were awarded after the battle.

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CHAPTER XLIX

THE SALONICA FRONT, 1916

To many the fighting on the Salonica front always appeared as something—one of those Eastern side-shows—that possibly was necessary, but was really quite unimportant compared with what went on in the West. In 1916, with the Battle of the Somme raging in France, there was, perhaps, justification for such an attitude. Nevertheless, many thousands of British soldiers fought, and suffered nearly every known plague, in this desolate and monotonous country. The operations at Salonica played a not unimportant part in bringing about the common victory. This campaign was, in truth, one of the mines which, when blown, helped to blast away the foundations of the enemy alliance.

DURING the first four months of 1916 the British Salonica Force had enough "Tolstoyan spade labour" to last it for the rest of its life. Under its picks and spades the hills roughly eight miles north of the city were converted into a vast entrenched bastion connecting with the Vardar marsh defences to the west, the lake defences of Langaza and Beshik to the east, and so to the Gulf of Orfano and Ægean Sea.

An Optimistic Prophet

This "Bird-cage," as it was called, on account of the quantity of wire expended on it, was the Allied retort to the cheerful prophecy of General Dousmanis, Chief of the General Staff at Athens: "You will be driven into the sea, and you will not have time even to cry for mercy."

If the Bulgar descended from his Doiran and Struma heights on the frontier, we wanted to make sure we should *not* be pushed into the sea. The sea, in fact, would be our asset, for the only route along which he could bring heavy artillery and wheeled transport—when the "Bird-cage" had been completed—stretched from the mouth of the Struma along the shore of the Gulf, where British gunboats would be able to rake him with heavy fire.

On most of the remaining hill defences, as Mr. G. Ward Price remarks in *The Story of the Salonica Army*: "It was like looking from the battlements of a mediæval castle, and the enemy would have been able to conceal nothing from our view. With field glasses you could have watched his camps and depôts beyond the reach even of our naval guns. In fact, had the Bulgarians advanced on Salonica we should have been in exactly the same position towards them as the Turks at Achi Baba (Gallipoli) occupied with regard to us."

The enemy would have needed huge forces for any frontal attack: the marshes on the west flank, the lakes and rocky Rendina Gorge on the east, made an encircling thrust impracticable. Roads and light Decauville-type railway were laid to transport men and material rapidly to the various strong-points. Beyond the arc, jutting up from the plain west of the Seres Road, was an outpost hill so formidable that it was named Gibraltar. Communication trenches connecting the strong-points were so sited and dug that they could form fire-trenches in emergency.

In this Herculean task the 26th Division was allotted the right flank, from Tumba at Aivatli on the Seres Road; the 28th Division thence to Balcha: the 22nd to the junction with the French on the left at Dautli; while three brigades of the 27th Division were in reserve at Lembet, outside the city. Detachments were pushed forward by the 26th to Lankados, north of Lake Langaza, and by the 28th to Guvezne on the Seres Road, as advanced posts.

Lakes Patrolled

The 29th Brigade, minus artillery and transport, was sent by sea round the Chalcidice Peninsula to the Gulf of Orfano, landing at Stavros, bivouacking along the Rendina Gorge, and building isolated works, protected by wire, on the dominating crags. Lakes Beshik and Langaza, farther inland, were patrolled by boat.

Thus was the whole approach to the city bolted and barred, while observers kept watch from the high places and patrols remained alert on the intervening hills and plains. The French put a great deal of work into the low-lying sector between the Galliko and Vardar rivers, building machine-gun emplacements, deep dug-outs, labyrinths of wire which could be swept by cross-fire from the flanks in the event of a break-through, ammunition and stores dumps in the ravines of the foothills, and, farther back, an elaborate system of reserve trenches.

All this work was completed without molestation from the enemy, and was therefore highly scientific in its planning. The only diversions were occasional air-raids on Salonica itself. On January 7th German machines flew over and caused eighteen casualties. On February 1st a Zeppelin was responsible for damage and fire. On March 27th German aeroplane bombs fired a store of high-explosive in the French engineers' depot, causing considerable havoc.

On the night of May 5th the same Zeppelin, after a series of further attempts, droned over Salonica for the third—and last—time. The townspeople, wakened by the bark of anti-aircraft guns, looked up and saw the airship clearly, caught by a searchlight-beam from H.M.S. *Agamemnon* in the harbour. It was the first Zepp. they had seen, and they rushed out-of-doors in a characteristically Oriental panic.

As it zoomed over the harbour, a 12-pounder on the forward bridge of the *Agamemnon* blazed away and scored a hit, bringing it down on to the desolate marshes at the mouth of the Vardar. Cheers rang across the water from British and French warships. A few minutes later it burst into flames, fired by its crew before they scattered over the swamps in the hope of finding some way of escape.

Seeking a Zeppelin Crew

A torpedo-boat patrolling the harbour-boom at once landed a party to round up the crew; and then began a game of hide-and-seek among the thick reeds and bogs. One detachment, running into another, called "Hands up!" "Hands up yourselves, you blighters!" shouted back the other; "we've been looking for you all morning!"

From the wreck the *Agamemnon* claimed a propeller and hung it on the wall of the Captain's quarters; a German naval war ensign, still hanging from the stern, was preserved in the Paris War Museum. For days afterwards British officers, sailors, even

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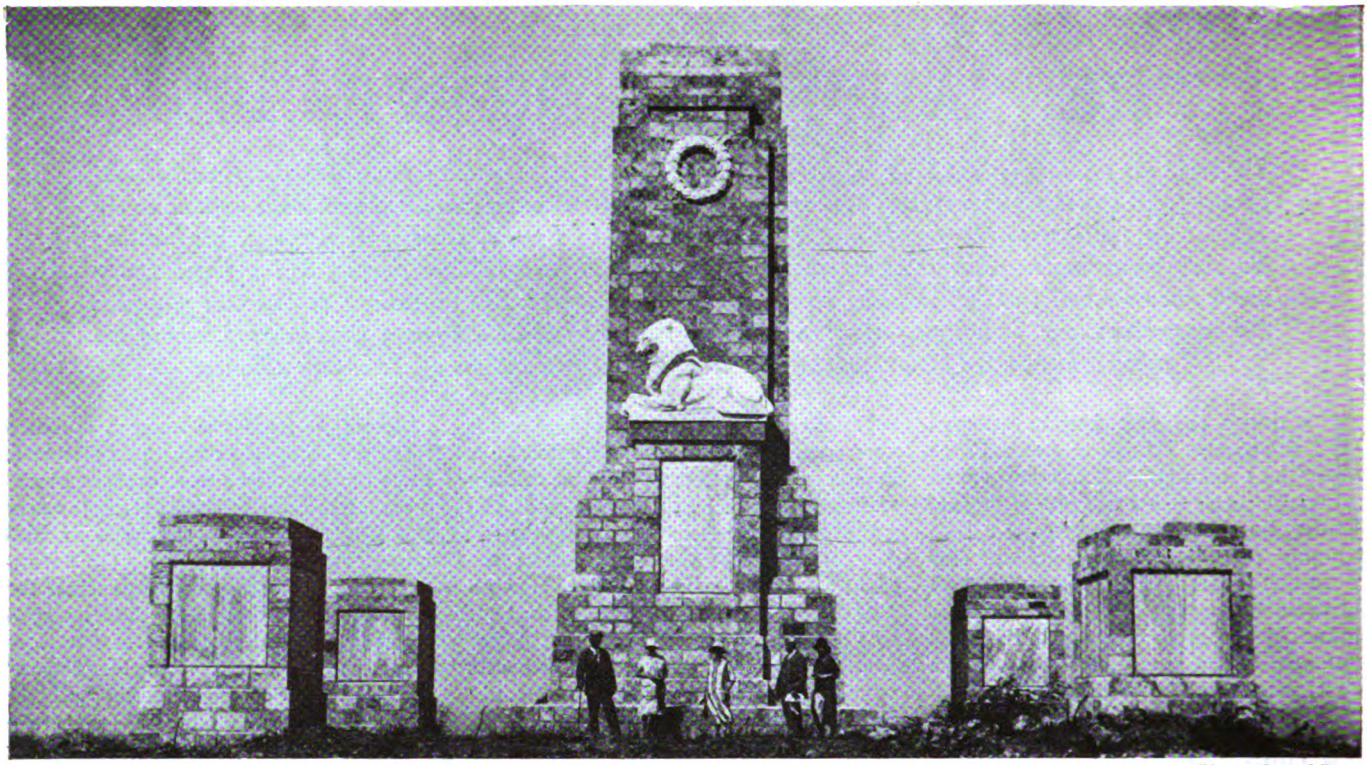

Photo : Central Press.

THE DOIRAN MEMORIAL

There are in Greece three British memorials to the missing erected by the Imperial War Graves commission : one at Doiran, one at Mikra, and one (to Indian troops) on the Monastir Road. All these are in the area of the Salonica fighting, and of the three that at Doiran, here illustrated, is the most important. It records the names of 2,213 officers and men of the British forces in Macedonia who fell in action and have no known graves and stands as a silent reminder of heroism on a distant but little-known front.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

IN THE GLOAMING

A British mounted patrol moving off at dusk along a road in the notorious Struma Valley, October 4th, 1916. Our troops had occupied the line Butkova—Tachinos, on the Struma, the previous June. On August 27th the Bulgarians had made a successful thrust east of the river, but exactly a fortnight later the British had managed to cross, and had driven the enemy from many of the villages on the eastern side.

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Photo: Central Press.

STRUMA CEMETERY

Once again we have the flat headstones which are to be found in most of the Eastern Front British cemeteries. In Greece (exclusive of the Ægean Islands) there are 17 cemeteries under the auspices of the Imperial War Graves Commission, commemorating in all 11,490 dead. Other Balkan burial-grounds—to the total of 16—distributed through the Ægean Islands, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Roumania, commemorate 1,668 British fallen. It is a remarkable fact, and one that redounds to the credit of the Imperial War Graves Commission, that on every front where our men fought and died the cemeteries in which they lie are to this day tended with the greatest care.

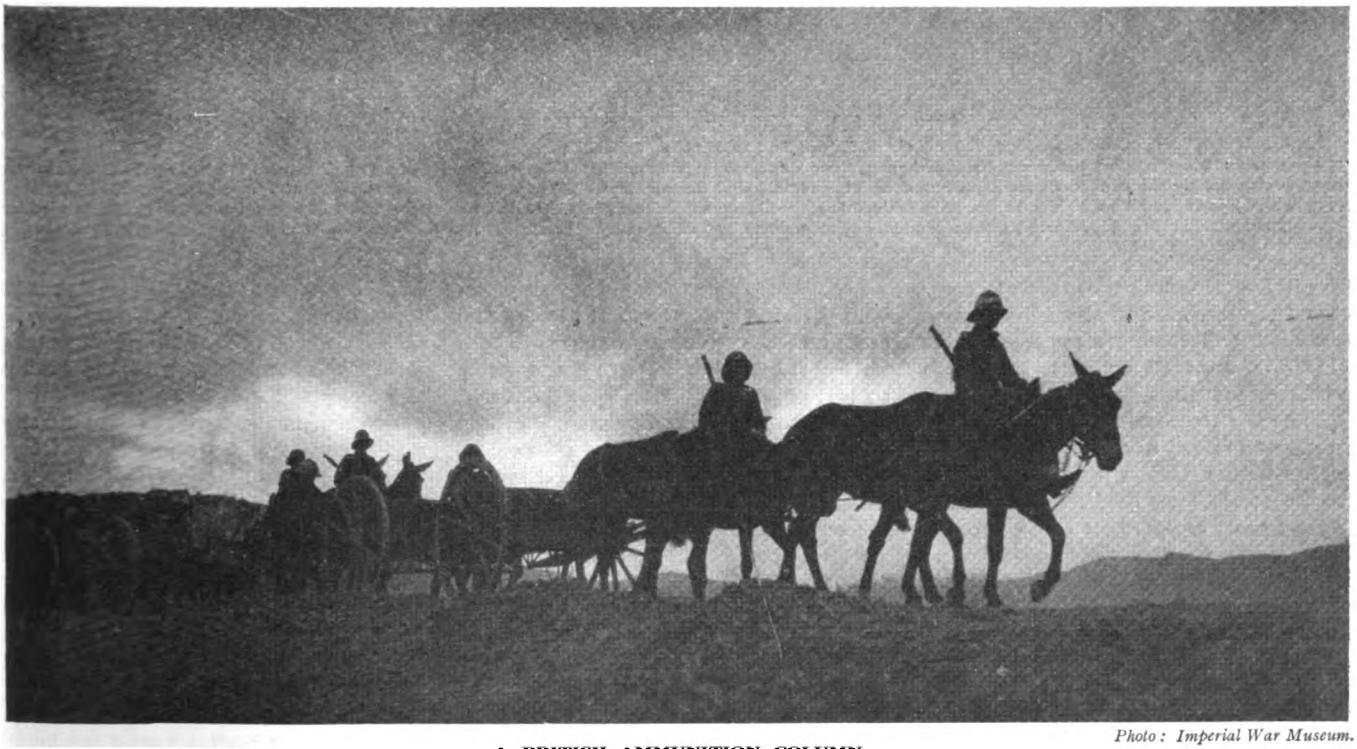

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A BRITISH AMMUNITION COLUMN

This photograph was taken on the same date, and in the same locality, as the lower illustration on the opposite page. In our operations of September 10th, 1916 (the day we crossed the Struma) our forces occupied, but had to abandon, the strategically-important townlet of Yenikeui. This we again managed to capture, and to hold, on October 3rd—the date of the First Battle of Monastir—after part of the Bulgarian line had been seized on September 30th.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

FLEURBAIX—RUINED

The position of Fleurbaix is 5 km. south-west of Armentières, on the main Armentières—Neuve-Chapelle—La Bassée road. The village is at the extreme north of this part of the Pas-de-Calais department, and is within 6 or 7 km. of the Belgian frontier. In the German attack on the Lys, 9th—10th April, 1918, which opened at 7 a.m. on the former date in thick fog, the Germans broke through the left brigade of the 2nd Portuguese Division in this sector. The 12th Suffolks, 40th Division, then rendered great service by holding out in Fleurbaix until the evening, although attacked on three sides.

hospital nurses, made the muddy journey over the marshes and through a forest of reeds to collect souvenirs : a Canadian M.O. was drowned trying to reach the wreck on horseback

The crew were rounded up by French cavalry the next morning as they were trying to dry their drenched uniforms in the sun. They said the airship had come from Temesvar in Hungary, and had raided Riga, Dvinsk, and Minsk in Russia. It was 600 feet long, with four six-cylinder engines, and an inscription on the nose read : " Potsdam, August 11th, 1915." They had been picked up by anti-aircraft batteries on the hills, and followed all the way down the lines ; when they eventually reached Salonica they were blinded by the glare of searchlights and could not see to drop their bombs.

Mr. Ward Price tells of a midshipman who, hearing rumours that two of the crew had been pinned underneath and burned alive, burrowed in the slime and triumphantly unearthed a " charred human hand " clutching at something in a last agony. It was bottled in spirits of wine, and much envied by the other gun-room snotties.

One day a friend pleaded with him to part with just one finger of the gruesome relic, and he agreed. The ship's surgeon was asked to perform the operation ; he sliced through the finger at one cut, and the " hand " proved to be merely a glove singed by the flames and filled with caked mud !

Cold and Monotony

Up on the " Bird-cage " during those four months there were several heavy falls of snow ; the " Vardar wind " blew from the north with a freezing ferocity which penetrated even goatskin jerkins. The monotony of the work in those exposed solitudes was deadening ; and when, in the Spring, route-marches and exercises were resumed, our troops marched out of the " Bird-cage " as blithely as if they themselves were birds released from captivity.

The cavalry patrols probably had the best of the bargain ; although their work was jumpy and risky, at least it had its excitements. Those based on Kilkish, a village far out in the plain, half-way between the " Bird-cage " and the Doiran frontier, kept a wary eye on the Bulgar positions and the lonely Krusha-Balkan ridge to the east, bumping into German Uhlans from time to time.

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It was almost epic country for skirmishes and ambushes—wild, rough, wooded with dwarf oak scrub in parts, seamed by gullies and stony ravines. At high look-outs like the Gola ridge the German cavalry and our own played almost a daily—or nightly—game of hide-and-seek. This was the high window overlooking " Johnnie's " lines of communication. Perched up there under cover, one would see a Bulgar or German staff car winding down the Strumnitza road to Doiran, convoys of pack-mules carrying supplies to some reserve dump, troops on the move, all the manifold activities that go on behind a war front.

One might see, too, a German observation-balloon hovering over the hills, and specially on the look-out for an armoured train, carrying two 8-inch guns, which the French at intervals sent along the Karasuli-Kilindir loop. This was the " Hit-and-run Special," which always fired cheekily from a different spot, rather like an urchin pitching a stone at a window and then " beating it." Those 8-inch sallies used to annoy the Bulgars, and the balloon was under urgent orders to signal the location of the flashes immediately the train stopped and " opened out."

Politics at Salonica

Meantime, Salonica itself was still racked by conflicting policies and ambitions. General Sarrail became involved in the Greek political jig-saw, and on more than one occasion embarrassed the British commander by his secretiveness. The arrest of the consuls of four hostile powers at the end of December, 1915 was a case in point. These consulates were in constant touch with swarms of spies, who watched and recorded every move of the Allies.

" Some of the agents," the *Official History*[1] states, " did not even trouble to adopt the methods implied by the word ' spy ' ; they stood on the waterfront and recorded openly in their notebooks the numbers and regimental badges of the troops as they disembarked."

General Mahon's intelligence service had been weaving a net round these busybodies, and was biding its time to round them up at one swoop. When, therefore, on the 30th he received a message to the effect that Sarrail intended seizing the consuls at three that afternoon, and would welcome British co-operation, he feared such summary action would warn off these agents and enable them to slip away.

However, it was too late for him to raise any serious objection. For the sake of formality, a small party of

[1] *Military Operations, Macedonia*, i.

Photo: Keystone.

FLEURBAIX—RESTORED

On September 30th, 1918, British troops reached the Roulers—Menin road, and were within two miles of Menin. This pronounced advance constituted a serious threat to the German position at Lille, from which they were already beginning to remove stores and troops. They therefore withdrew altogether from Lille, and also from Armentières, La Bassée, and Lens. On October 2nd British forces crossed the Lys between Wervieq and Comines, and the same day took Fleurbaix. Our re-occupation of Armentières followed on October 3rd.

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British was sent to take part in the arrests, and although there was no actual trouble, the Greeks protested strongly against Sarrail's action.

Another extremely delicate move was the sudden " taking over " of the Kara Burun forts, opposite the mouth of the Vardar, under cover of the guns of French warships. General Mahon, who doubted the wisdom of this measure, was informed only on January 27th that a French battalion and two batteries would occupy the forts twelve hours later.

If the Greek garrison resisted, it would be taken by assault; and Mahon was asked to place two battalions east of the city to resist any attempts by Greek troops in that area to march to the garrison's assistance.

The Affair of Kara Burun

Kara Burun commanded the entrance to the harbour. For some days H.M.S. *Canning's* captive balloon had observed that the garrison were busy building new gun-emplacements, and had laid in a stock of armour-piercing shells of new pattern. Our relations with the Greeks at the time were near breaking-point; it was thought that these preparations could hardly be favourable to the Allied warships in the harbour, and might aim at cutting off the shore forces from the sea.

The French Minister of Marine decided on immediate action, and informed Sarrail through Admiral Gaucher, commanding the Eastern Mediterranean, that all the Allied ships then at Salonica —French, British, Russian, Italian— should be represented, the British ships landing Marines.

The method adopted was both secret and thorough. Some 3,000 French troops marched round behind the city and along the east side of the Gulf toward the forts, covering 50 miles in two days. On the evening prior to the occupation the telephone wires connecting the forts with the Greek garrison and headquarters at Salonica were cut. At seven the next morning 100 Marines landed from H.M.S. *Albion* and were placed at the disposal of Col. Curie, the French officer directing the whole operation. Some battalions of British troops were kept in reserve ready for emergencies, being marched to an appointed place by staff officers, who were careful not to divulge the reason for the manœuvre.

The shore batteries comprised a principal battery of two 8·4-inch guns,

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MULTITUDE

Hénencourt, the scene of this teeming invasion, lies 6 km. due west of Albert, between the villages of Warloy and Millencourt. It is a little way north of the Amiens—Albert road. The above photograph was taken during the early stages of the March Retreat, 1918, and shows men of the 17th Division (V Corps), which at this time was back in corps reserve. The division had recently put up a very fine fight against the German attacks on our line near Hermies, 13 km. east of Bapaume.

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Photo: Keystone.

SOLITUDE

Nothing very sensational happened at Hénencourt, nor is there even a British War cemetery named after the village. There is, however, a cemetery named after Millencourt, a hamlet barely 2 km. away, and this burial-ground is situated midway along the road connecting the two places. Used by Field Ambulances and the III Corps Main Dressing Station in 1916, and by the 4th Australian Division and others in March—April, 1918, the cemetery records 273 United Kingdom, 50 Australian, 7 Canadian, 7 New Zealand, 1 South African, and 2 unknown burials.

originally installed during the Turkish occupation, and others manned with two 6-inch Armstrong guns and German field guns. French troops, with British Marines, stopped about every twenty minutes as they approached the forts to throw up "scrapes" of earth for protection; at 2,500 yards mountain guns were assembled and dug in. A screen of cavalry in the rear covered any possible menace from the city; three Farman 'planes co-operated to observe developments.

An Unenviable Situation

"No chances were taken," Mr. Ward Price states, "for the stake was great. We were really in a weak position at Salonica, for all our apparent strength. King Constantine was believed to be even eager for a pretext to be driven into hostilities against us, and if a fight with the Greeks had started, supported as it would have been very quickly by German detachments rushed down the railway, we should have been in an unpleasant situation, with our backs to the sea and a hostile and treacherous population all around us."

Near Kara Burun Point, the British Marines were ordered to forge ahead and occupy Tuzla Fort, an outlying work some three miles beyond the others. "They set out and had gone some way when they met a detachment of Greek soldiers under a sergeant, who at once halted his men and gave the order 'Fix bayonets!' The English continued to advance with sloped arms and without bayonets fixed, when the Greek N.C.O. suddenly produced an automatic pistol and levelled it at the head of the Marine captain in command of the party. On this, the Marines halted and the intelligence officer of the *Albion*, who had been brought up in Turkey and spoke Greek excellently, opened a parley. He said: 'We have come to occupy the fort. It's quite all right. Everything has been fixed up by this time with the Greek C.O. at Karaburnu' (Kara Burun).

"The N.C.O., on this, said that he would let them pass if they would give him time to send a messenger back to Tuzla to ring up Karaburnu. The messenger was sent, but it afterwards transpired that he took a recommendation to the Greek officer there to serve out ball-cartridge and prepare to defend the fort."

Our men continued along the barren coastline to Tuzla, where they found some of the garrison lining a breastwork and manning the windows of a building used as barracks. A subaltern in com-

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

THE UBIQUITOUS RED CROSS

The wonderful and wholly indispensable organisations grouped under this symbol owe their origin to one Jean Henri Dunant, a native of Geneva, whose graphic descriptions of the horrors endured in the Crimean and Austro-Hungarian Wars provoked an international stir. Over 40 nations have now ratified the convention. In addition to transporting 10 million casualties in its ambulances, the Red Cross during the Great War undertook the onerous task of endeavouring to trace all the missing. Its great work will ever remain a cherished memory.

mand came out to parley, saying his C.O. had gone to Salonica on forty-eight hours' leave, and he refused to allow the Marines to take over. The English captain thereupon sent word back to the French ; a French officer arrived and informed the Greek subaltern : " You must surrender to superior force. If you resist, the Fleet has orders directly it hears the sound of firing to shell every strategic point in Salonica."

Minor Turkish Triumph

The battleships and monitors actually had their guns ready trained on the barracks and public buildings of the city ; and the subaltern, convinced that resistance with his 70 men was inadvisable, opened the gates, complaining that he had actually helped to turn the Turks out of the forts in the first Balkan War. " And now you've turned us out," he added despondently. An old Turk who came to the captured fort to sell vegetables to our men provided an amusing sequel to this Greek complaint. His white beard shaking with laughter, he told the interpreter : " Ah, it is such a pleasure to see the English instead of the Greeks where my brothers the Turks used to be ! "

The French occupied the other forts without resistance, and Kara Burun was ours before Greek H.Q. at Salonica knew what was happening. When they heard the news they were extremely angry. . . .

They had their revenge on May 26th, when Bulgars and Germans advanced on Rupel in the Struma Valley. The fort commanding Rupel Pass, together with adjacent villages, was surrendered without a fight, thus blocking the readiest route by which the Allies might have attempted to advance north into Bulgaria.

The enemy force comprised something over three regiments of infantry, with artillery, three companies of German sappers, and Uhlan cavalry. As it advanced in three columns, the centre one moving on Rupel, the Greek garrison fired a few shells, presumably as a matter of form—which the invaders ignored. At noon an emissary with a white flag was sent to demand the surrender of the fort. The officer in command replied that he could not do this without orders from Athens, so a few hours' grace was granted. At 2.30 p.m. the garrison received a telegraphed order to evacuate, and the Bulgars marched in, formally signing a detailed inventory of the contents as new tenants taking over by arrangement !

Crafty Constantine

Mr. Ward Price quotes a telegram to the Athens government from General Bayeras, commanding the 6th Greek Division at Seres, which came to the knowledge of the French General Staff and helped to confirm the theory that the fort was surrendered by Constantine by collusion. " The Germans and Bulgars arrived at Demir Hissar station this morning to occupy it," it read. " I told them that I could not hand over the station without previous reference to you, because the transference of Demir Hissar station was not comprised in the treaty." This was a day or two after the surrender of the fort, when the enemy moved into neighbouring positions.

A year later, Mr. Ward Price adds, when a Venezelist government was re-established, it became known that, immediately before handing over the fort, Constantine's government obtained, as the price of it, a loan of £3,000,000 from the German government—and this at the very time when it was trying to negotiate a further £5,000,000 from the Allies !

After occupying Demir Hissar the enemy pressed south to Kavalla, thus enclosing the Allied right flank in an arc. Here part of the Greek garrison under Col. Hatzopoulo went over to the invaders. A contingent of anti-Bulgar Greeks from Seres, under Col. Christodoulo, managed to get back to Salonica by way of the island of Thasos. It was fêted in the city, and later the Colonel became the first general of the Venezelist troops.

The majority of Salonicans resented the occupation of Rupel by their hereditary enemy ; a large meeting was held to protest against its surrender by

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Constantine's government, and from that time popular feeling began to veer towards the Allies.

The ultimate outcome was the Salonica revolution in August, when pro-Ally gendarmerie besieged royalist troops in the barracks. Sarrail was compelled to intervene in the interests of order; and a Committee of National Defence, formed by the revolutionary party to administrate for the city, mobilised the 1915 class throughout Macedonia—which was the beginning of co-operation between Greek and Allied forces on the Balkan front.

The Venizelist Proclamation

A proclamation of August 30th, signed by Col. Zimbrakakis, the leader of the movement, by Col. Mazarakis, Venezelist deputy for Seres, and other important personages, left no doubt as to the change in the popular attitude. Addressed to the Greek people and army, and posted on the walls of the city, it was to this effect:

"The surrender to the Bulgars of Greek forts and territories is a betrayal of the fatherland to foreign interests. The time has come for Greece to place herself by the side of the powers of the Entente, who have always been her friends." It urged the Greek troops at Salonica to reject further orders from Athens and join the Allies in driving the Bulgars off Greek soil.

The Greek gendarmerie—mainly Venezelist Cretans—rallied to the movement at once, donning blue-and-white armlets as their badge, and marched through the town to Sarrail's headquarters to volunteer their services, followed by a crowd hastily armed with any available weapon. Col. Zimbrakakis made an eloquent speech from horseback, and there were cries of "Down with the King!"

At dusk all British troops were ordered out of the town, and at 4.30 the next morning, after desultory firing had opened between the barracks and the gendarmerie, who besieged it in the dark, the opposing factions came face-to-face on the parade-ground in front, and began to blaze away at each other. Only one or two were killed on each side, as well as a few civilians from stray bullets.

At 6 a.m. 100 French infantry and half a troop of cavalry marched up to restore order; others followed and lined the parade-ground, while a couple of platoons set up machine guns at the rear of the barracks, an anti-aircraft lorry trained its gun on the main gate, a battery of six trench-mortars took up position, and aeroplanes circled overhead.

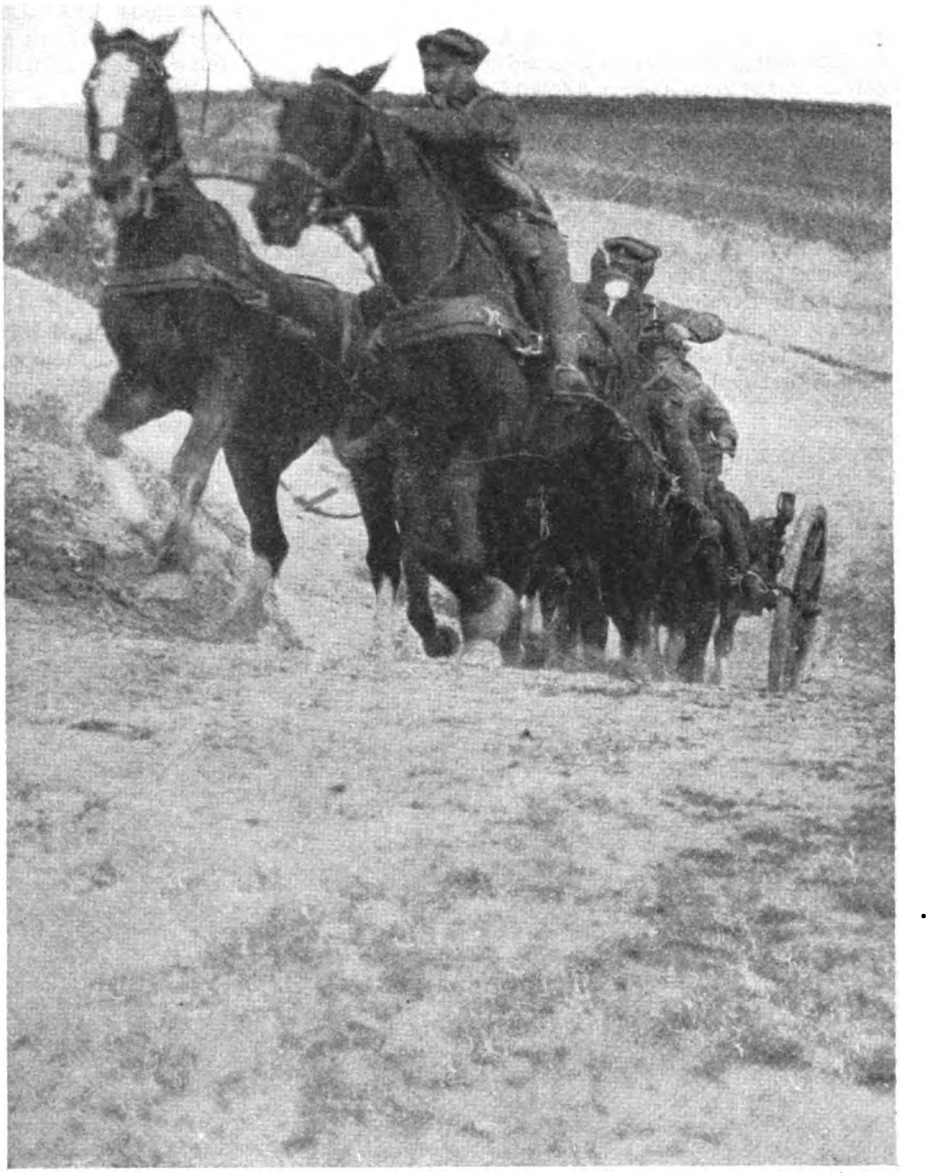

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MIND YOUR HOSSES!

Heave-ho, and up she rises: an artillery team taking a bank with fine gusto on the Struma front during November, 1916. Our second capture of Yenikeui (see foot of page 785) was followed by a further British advance, on October 7th, between the Struma River and the Demi-Hissar—Seres railway. Then, on October 31st, we scored an encouraging success by the capture of three more villages and 300 prisoners. On October 5th we took Nevolyen.

The Gilbertian Touch

Then—for the Gilbertian touch was seldom lacking from Salonican affairs—"a little convoy of empty carts came very peaceably out of the main gate, presumably to fetch the day's rations, and try to restore things to a normal basis by following out the regular routine. The revolutionary pickets sternly turned it back, however, to the undisguised discouragement of the garrison, who had been watching the fate of this important mission with anxiety."

At 10.30, when General Sarrail ar-

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rived on the parade-ground, about fifty Royalist officers trooped out of the barracks minus their swords, and declared that, while they would have no dealings with the revolutionaries, they would not object to making an agreement with the French. Sarrail called for their surrender, to which they agreed. They were permitted to keep their swords; the men were disarmed and marched to the French camp at Zeitenlick. After which the movement spread to other centres and became general.

A Year of Developments

The year 1916 was one of rapid developments. On April 10th a troop of Sherwood Rangers ambushed two troops of German cavalry in a nullah near Pataros, south-east of Doiran station, inflicting losses on the enemy. This was the first real engagement since the retreat, although the Yeomanry had driven back isolated patrols.

In the middle of April the British moved up to Yanesh: on May 1st Major-Gen. the Hon. F. Gordon, commanding the advanced troops, made Kukush (Kilkish) his headquarters. By this time the French divisions had also moved up on the Vardar and Struma. On May 9th Gen. Mahon was appointed to Egypt, Lt.-Gen. Milne taking over the command of the XVI Corps.

In April the transfer of the Serbian army from Corfu to Salonica began. Despite the care expended by the British and French authorities, who shared the cost of refitting the survivors, 5,400 died at Corfu between the end of January and the end of April—so severe had been the sufferings of this gallant force. It now totalled 120,000, with another 25,000 still undergoing treatment. Six divisions were encamped for training in the Vasilika Deresi valley, 10 miles south-east of Salonica. In July Prince Alexander and the Serbian War Ministry moved to Salonica.

Bulgar Advantages

The Allies could now muster 15 divisions, some 300,000 troops, to approximately 260,000 Bulgars, but they were deficient in aircraft, mountain and heavy artillery, and mule and other transport. The enemy had the advantage, too, in occupying all the dominating heights, which he had converted into formidable fortresses. Nevertheless, Sarrail was becoming impatient to attack, for an offensive would not only bring enemy troops from other fronts, but give Roumania some incentive to come in on the side of the Allies.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NOT QUITE RED-HANDED

The two Turks in this picture have been caught behaving in a suspicious manner—"snooping around," as the Americans would say—near the British lines in Macedonia. They are therefore being taken to headquarters, handcuffed to the stirrups of two cavalrymen. Notice the mules which here take the place of the cavalry soldier's highly-prized horse; also the peasants' characteristic dress; and finally, the scenery, likewise characteristic, which might nevertheless pass for that of a country lane in England.

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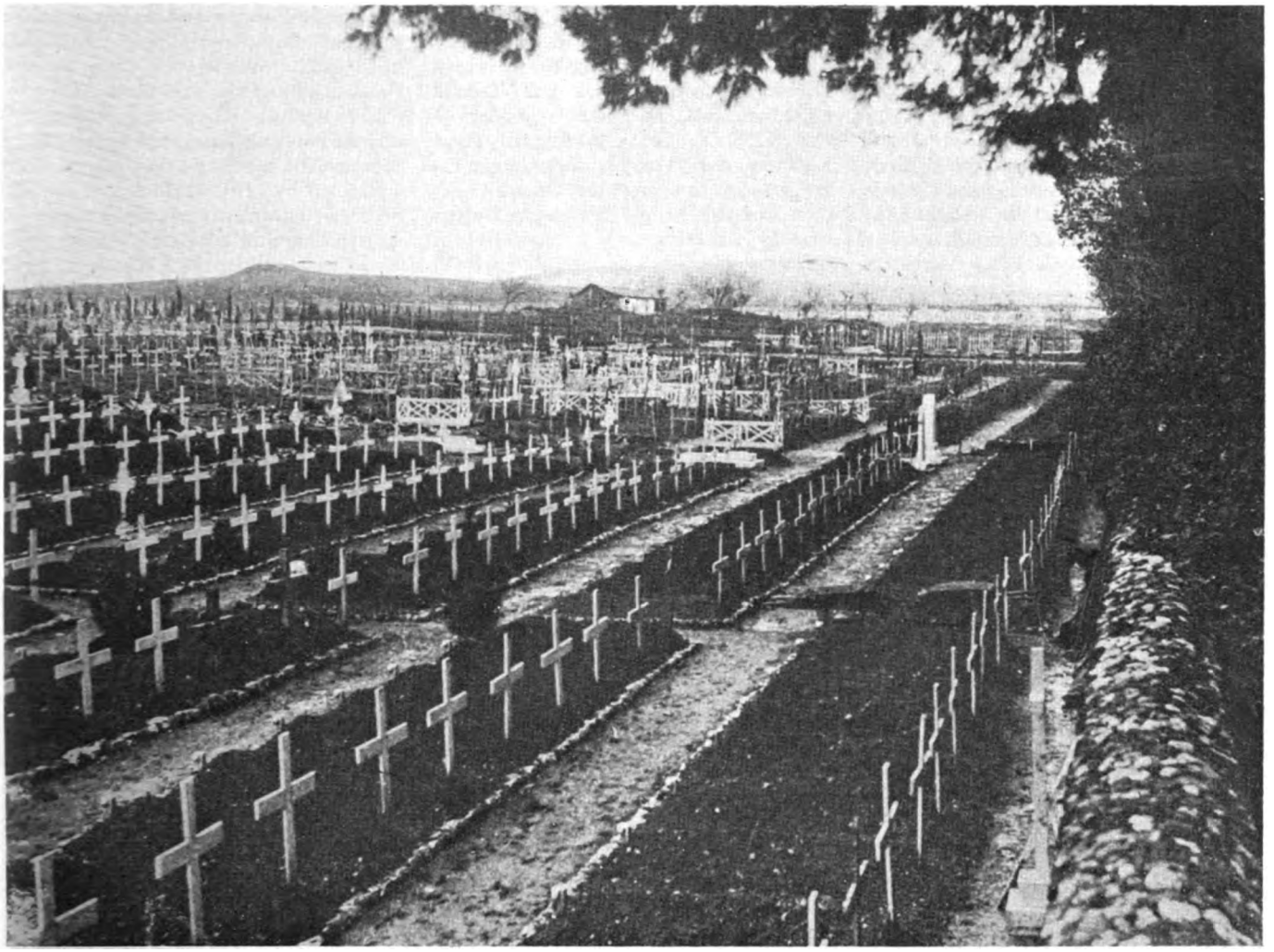

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN THE EARLY DAYS

A British cemetery at Salonica in the days before the Imperial War Graves Commission had "taken over." This front was one of those unfortunate ones where the toll of death levied by the fighting was supplemented by that due to disease. In this respect the British and French were among the worst sufferers, since their own climates differed the most markedly from that of Macedonia.

On June 3rd he strengthened his grip on the Base by proclaiming martial law at Salonica, prohibiting a torchlight procession in honour of King Constantine's name-day, and taking over the control of post and telegraph offices, railways, and the Salonica press. Next, a partial blockade of the Greek coasts was instituted, partly to stop supplies reaching Kavalla and falling into the hands of the enemy.

Then the Allies demanded that the Greek Army, still a menace to their rear, should be demobilised and placed on a peace footing. The Chamber was dissolved and a new election held. Certain police officials who had been hostile to the Allies were relieved of their posts. A new Ministry was formed to carry out the Allies' demands.

These measures were necessary before any movement against the Bulgars could be made, for Sarrail could not concentrate on the problem in front of him while that in his rear was giving him unceasing worry.

On June 8th Gen. Milne was allotted a definite British zone south and east of a line drawn from Lake Butkovo along the Bahisli river to Sarikoi, three miles east of the Doiran railway at Yanesh. The change involved much arduous marching for the British troops, in shade temperatures of up to 100 degrees; and those of the 10th and 28th Divisions, which took up positions in the Struma valley, at once became the prey of the malarial mosquito prevalent in this unhealthy area. The new arrangement, however, opened the way to closer co-operation between the French and British commanders.

Roumania Enters the Lists

On August 17th Roumania, after prolonged negotiations, signed certain military conventions with the Allies. On the 27th she declared war on Hungary; on the 28th Germany declared war on her; on the 30th Turkey followed suit; and on September 1st, Bulgaria. By this time, unfortunately, the Russian advance had been stopped, and the offensive north of the Pripet marshes defeated. Roumania's extra weight was not as valuable as it might have been a few months earlier.

By mid-August all the British battalions, except those of the 80th Brigade at Stavros, and the Pioneers had been equipped with pack-mule transport for mountain warfare, and Cypriot and Macedonian muleteers recruited under British N.C.O.'s and men for transport service with fighting units. Plans were made for bringing in additional lorry convoys and providing each division with a mechanical transport supply column and ammunition park.

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Everything was ready for the long-deferred offensive ; but on August 17th the Bulgars, also wishing to impress—or intimidate—Roumania, advanced against the Serbian forces now defending the Monastir front north of Florina, and the following morning attacked them with 12,000 men, driving them back. This serious retreat on our left took the sting out of our first offensive, launched by the French, with British artillery support, against the Bulgar centre at Doiran on the 15th, when they attacked an advance position called Tortoise Hill.

In connection with this attack it was arranged that the 22nd Division, XII Corps, should secure the left flank by occupying the low hills west of Vladaya, and support the right by placing a brigade on the ridge between Gola and Kilindir after the French had moved forward. A brigade of field artillery was also to support the French 17th Division from positions in the Vladaya neighbourhood, and heavy artillery—the XXXVII Group and 43rd Siege Battery—was to engage the enemy guns and observation-posts on Grand Couronne and the " Pip " Ridge, the Bulgar heights towering above the Doiran sectors. No. 17 Squadron R.F.C., too, was given its first important task on this front—that of preventing enemy machines from observing and reporting our gun positions.

The Attack on Horseshoe Hill

When the French had sustained 1,100 casualties in the struggle for Tortoise Hill and the ruined village of Doldzeli, the 7th Ox. and Bucks L.I. were ordered to attack Horseshoe Hill, an adjacent position above the village. Four guns of the 78th Machine Gun Company and two sections of the 31st Field Company, R.E., assisted. The advance was organised in two columns, that on the right commanded by Major Debenham, that on the left by Lt.-Col. Robinson. On the night of the 17th the position was rushed with the bayonet. By 10.40 p.m. the two flanks were carried, but the centre held out for a time, eventually falling to a renewed bombing attack.

The Bulgars launched a heavy counter-attack in the early hours of the 19th against this hotly contested centre, but without regaining it. The Ox. and Bucks casualties totalled 105. Although a small action in itself, it was significant because it gave us a foretaste of the grim fighting which was to

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

IN ACHIET-LE-PETIT

Achiet-le-Petit—which, quite incidentally, is rather larger than Achiet-le-Grand—lies due north of Irles, and 7 km. west-north-west of Bapaume. During the fighting on the Ancre in March, 1917, when our troops were following up the German retirement, progress was made near Achiet-le-Petit within the first week of the month, and a further advance toward this place and Essarts followed on the 14th. Our photograph shows a battalion of the Middlesex Regiment moving up through the village during the Battle of St. Quentin.

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take place on this Doiran front in the two succeeding years: fighting in which the odds were heavily against us, for while we were struggling desperately for the lower bastions formed by the foothills, the Bulgar could bombard us and launch counter-attacks from the higher.

These minor hills were divided by ravines, which made attack doubly difficult. There was, too, a psychological handicap as well as a physical one. War gave these bare hills and ravines a sinister aspect; one felt shut away from the world of one's kith and kin, and hated the idea of dying in this hidden corner of the Balkans, where the heat turned corpses black in a few days, and there seemed to be no cleansing wind to drive away the stench of death.

The writer still thinks of these Doiran sectors as the most foul and evil place he ever encountered anywhere in the world. There was no softening touch of civilisation even back in reserve and rest areas—only the relentless hills and plains. One had to journey at least 20 miles before encountering merely a squalid village inhabited by Macedonian peasants who seemed to belong not only to another race, but another century.

Exile with a Vengeance

In France it was possible to enjoy short spells among villages reminiscent of home—villages with gardens, cosy houses, shops, cafés; never on the Macedonian front. And there was no home-leave just the other side of twenty-one miles of water—a few days in noisy, dusty Salonica if one were lucky; more probably a fortnight in a field hospital with the chills and fevers of malaria, then a quick return to the line, and a night raid over some ravine-bottom in the dark and through the enemy wire on the opposite slope. . . . Or a "stunt" which seemed to have no sense or reason in it, except to bluff the Bulgar into thinking we were stronger than we were and to provide a diversion from another part of the front.

An attack of this kind was that on "Machine-gun Hill" and the Dorsale, north of Machukovo, west of Doiran, on September 13th. Here the country was more open than at Doiran, the rival positions farther apart. Amid the prevailing barrenness one might strike clumps of mulberry and sycamore, and in the moonlight, when there was no shelling, experience for a few moments the illusion of strolling through the woodlands of home. . . . In spring the ravine-sides would mock one with an all-too-brief beauty: blue chickory-

Photo: Keystone.

THE WRECKAGE CLEARED

In our final advance to victory, troops of the IV and VI Corps, after passing through other units of the same two corps which had been responsible for the opening attacks in the Battle of Bapaume, captured Achiet-le-Petit on August 21st, 1918. Much hard fighting preceded the capture, the difficulties of the situation being increased by a thick fog which, at first a help, afterwards caused considerable loss of direction. Achiet-le-Grand, which lies further to the east, was not taken until August 23rd.

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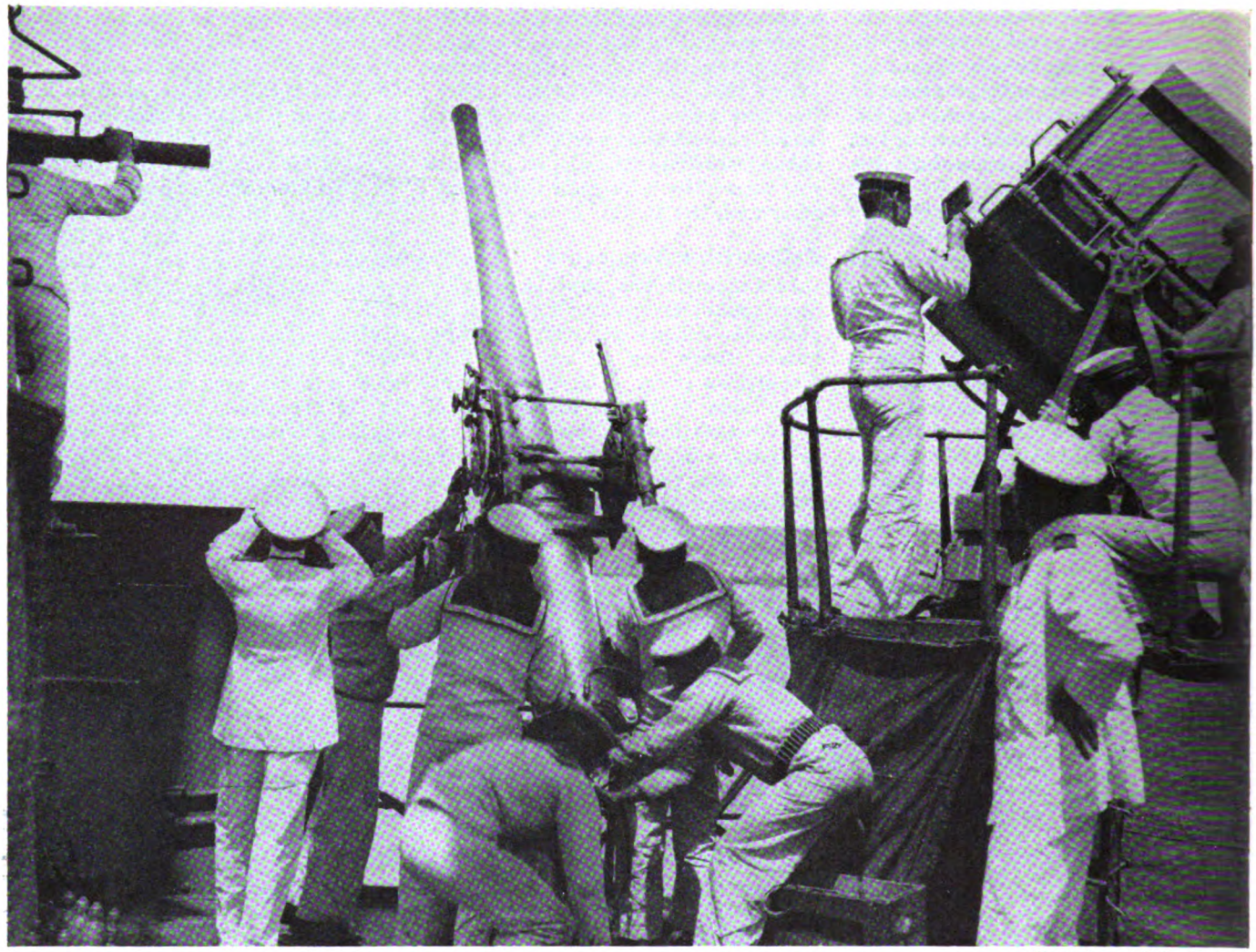

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PREPARING TO LAY LOW A ZEPPELIN

British sailors preparing, aboard H.M.S. *Agamemnon*, the 12-pounder gun which was to bring down the German Zeppelin *L.Z.*85 at the mouth of the Vardar in May, 1916. The first serious air-raid upon Salonica had been made on December 30th, 1915. The fatal visit of the *L.Z.*85 was her third, two previous raids having been carried out by her on February 1st and March 17th, 1916.

flower, delicate mauve cyclamen, clumps of flaming poppies.

At 7.30 p.m.—a summer hour intended for trysts of a more romantic kind—the 12th Lancashire Fusiliers and 14th King's of the 65th Brigade, 22nd Division, moved out of their wire into the tumbled No Man's Land ahead, the 9th East Lancs acting as right-flank guard, while the 11th Royal Welch Fusiliers, detached from the 67th Brigade, covered the left flank from the village of One Tree Hill, overlooking the Vardar, and the 9th King's Own lined up in reserve.

Successful Holding-attack

Three days' bombardment of this salient, held by German troops and strongly fortified, preceded the attack, which was a holding one designed to serve a bigger French and Serbian offensive from Lake Ostrovo far away over the Vardar to the left. Howitzers battered the enemy trenches, field guns ripped the wire, 60-pounders and long 6-inch guns searched his artillery positions.

Before the infantry went over, patrols crept out to reconnoitre the enemy wire and find where the biggest gaps had been made. The Lancashire Fusiliers assaulted Machine-gun Hill, the King's the Dorsale, and carried everything before them, bayoneting the defenders and bombing them out of dug-outs.

Within an hour-and-a-half of the opening of the attack the objectives were in our possession. But it was not intended we should hold them permanently; our task—as so often in these seemingly futile attacks in the Balkans—was merely to keep the enemy occupied for a time, though at a grim cost in men who fell by the way.

At seven the following morning the Bulgars bombarded the positions from three sides and enfiladed them with machine-gun fire from a point called the Dome. Shortly after 2 p.m. a counter-attack was repulsed. The King's, who had lost heavily, withdrew to the lower slope of the Dorsale; the Fusiliers temporarily lost Machine-gun Hill, but retook it and blocked the trenches leading to the former position, assisted by the Royal Welch. Then, at 4 p.m., they withdrew, and by 4.35 our troops were in their original lines, minus 586 casualties, plus 70 prisoners of the German *59th Regiment* and nine enemy machine guns, some trench-mortars having been destroyed before the withdrawal.

A small engagement, compared with

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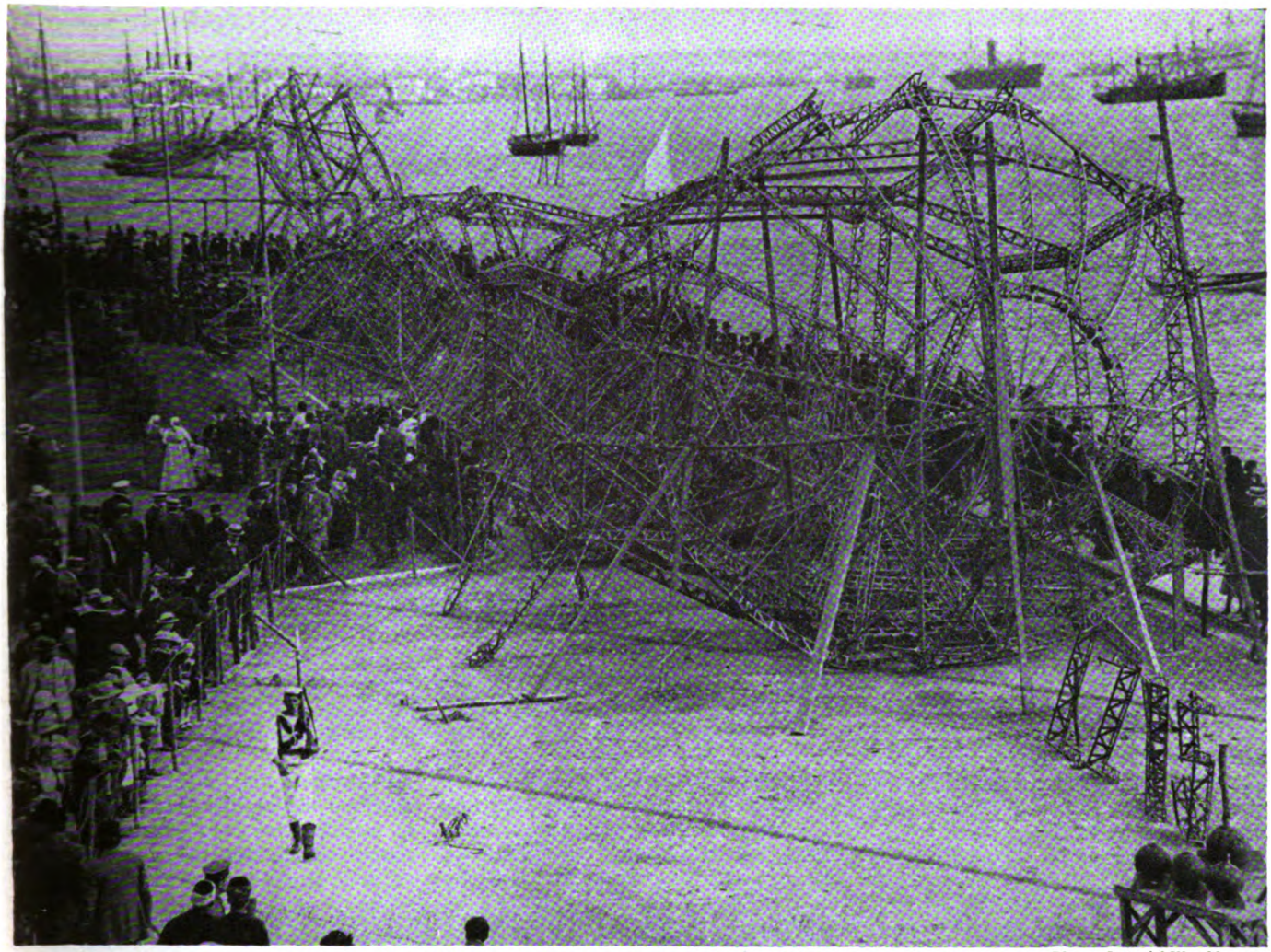

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE ZEPPELIN WHICH WAS LAID LOW

May 6th, 1916, was the exact date of the *L.Z.85's* destruction, and this photograph shows a British naval guard over her remains during their subsequent exhibition near the White Tower, Salonica. The framework had been stripped bare by flames from the airship's own petrol-tanks. The survivors of the crew—4 officers and 8 men, including Lieutenant Scherzer, the commander—were made prisoner.

the later Doiran attacks of the Spring of 1917 and the autumn of 1918; but grim enough for the troops concerned while it lasted. A man may suffer as much torment in a mere trench raid as in an attack on a big scale—and fight as heroically.

"Small" Affairs

There were similar "small" affairs in the wide Struma Valley this autumn, the object of which was to push in Bulgar advance posts.

On the night of September 29th troops of the 81st Brigade crossed the river in a mist, and at 5.15 a.m. formed up on a 1,000-yard front facing two villages: Karadjakeui Bala and Karadjakeui Zir, south of the Rupel Pass. The valley here was a nine-mile-wide plain partly given up to tobacco cultivation; occasional ditches, isolated villages, and groves of trees afforded the only cover; the Bulgar, from hills to the east and the Belashitza mountains to the north, could overlook the whole panorama.

The 2nd Gloucestershires were on the right, the 2nd Cameron Highlanders on the left, with the 1st Argyll and Sutherlands in support, the 1st Royal Scots behind them, and four sections of the 81st Machine Gun Company attached. Each battalion advanced in four lines 50 yards apart and carried Bala, with 87 prisoners, after a bombardment.

At 11.30 a.m. Zir was in its turn attacked. Here a Bulgar trench on the right flank caused some trouble, but at 5.15 the Royal Scots moved out in four waves from a sunken road leading south-west from Bala, the pipers leading the first company and skirling defiantly throughout the rest of the attack. It was strange, hearing those Highland pipes through the noise of battle in this Balkan valley.

In one trench 83 Bulgars surrendered. The Royal Scots entered Zir, and 250 prisoners and three machine guns were taken, our own brigade casualties totalling 364. Each man of the attacking party carried two days' rations, pack, rifle, 220 rounds of ammunition, and pick or shovel.

A Bird's-eye View

"From the artillery command post on one of the foothills at the edge of the plain one saw everything," Mr. Ward Price records. "Our men and the enemy were equally visible, and the work of the British artillery was even better than usual in consequence. . . . Never did a battle look more like a chess game than from this hill. The corps commander and his staff were standing there among the scrub. A deal

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table behind them was covered with maps.

"On another hillock the artillery general had his command post. New white telegraph poles brought a criss-cross of wires to it; a battery of telescopes of all calibres were directed to different points of the valley below. At the telephone a gunner staff officer was ringing up different batteries all the time. 'Is that the adjutant? What reports have you about ammunition? What's the bearing of that gun?—5730 magnetic, did you say? What's that? Enemy convoy proceeding along road to Hristian Camilla? Right. Tell one-four-three to get on to it.'

"A moment later he would be talking to the 6-inch howitzers, squat guns with caterpillar wheels, lurking in depressions of the ground at the foot of the hill, and looking, under their roofs of anti-aerial observation fish-netting, like some strange and gigantic fowl in a pen. 'Are you there? You are to stop firing now until four o'clock. At four you are to start shelling Zir one round a minute. Then at 4.10 whack in all you can everywhere round about inside the village. Now what time have you got? The infantry are going to try to rush the village at 4.15. Not a round is to be fired after that time. It's now 15.48. Pass that round to the batteries.'"

An officer at another 'phone reports enemy troops advancing from Yenikeui, a village to the north-east. All glasses focus on Yenikeui. "Yes, they're advancing," someone calls out. "There are some in the middle of the village, too. Lot of single men behind. Now there's a man on a horse behind. By Jove, it isn't a man on a horse, it's a gun! Well, they're not moving. I wonder if they're dummies. They put up very clever dummies sometimes."

Thrilling Aloft, and Sweaty Below

And so on. . . . Yes, it was a thrilling, spectacular war up there, while down below in the malaria-belt the "P.B.I." (Poor Blurry Infantry) sweated and moiled in smoke and flame and machine-gun hail to drive the Bulgars out of their village nests.

During the night, with a sickle moon peering over the hills, heavy counter-attacks were launched. Our men had to work hard to keep the Bulgars back between 1 and 2.15 a.m., and again later, with Lewis-guns which became choked with sand. The heaviest attack was against a salient in Zir held by the Camerons. The Bulgars got a footing in some houses, but were driven out and retired at daybreak, leaving 80 dead on the ground and 50 prisoners.

During the day the two villages were palled by clouds of black, yellow, brown, and white smoke, and riven by the flames of bursting shells. By night coloured signal lights flared up; the guns paled the sky like summer lightning; and in the flashes one saw the earth dotted with the dark shapes of

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FOUR BATTLES ON THE SOMME, 1916. 1.—ALBERT

A gigantic 15-inch howitzer being prepared for action in a well-screened spot, July 1st, 1916. An earlier Battle of Albert had been fought between September 25th and 29th, 1914, so that this was really the Second Battle. Albert itself was behind our lines on July 1st, 1916, and its name is applied in a general way to the big attack launched east of it on that date.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

2.—MORVAL

The Battle of Morval belongs to the third phase of the First Battle of the Somme—September, 1916. Morval village, standing on the heights north of Combles, had been heavily strengthened, and constituted a formidable obstacle. It was captured by us on September 29th. The above photograph shows supporting troops moving up to the attack from Ginchy, 3 km. further west.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

3.—THIEPVAL RIDGE

From a trench amid the debris of what had once been Thiepval village, a stretcher party carries a wounded man. The Battle of Thiepval Ridge is difficult to define, since the British attacked the village on July 1st, and were still outside it in mid-September, 1916. It was finally taken on September 27th, but fighting continued on the Ridge for some days.

men. When dawn came the twin villages, a mile apart, wakened sleepily, as if the inferno of the past twenty-four hours and more had been just a nightmare.

Mr. Ward Price, perched on those foothills, observed some of the strange contrasts of war. "During the most eventful part of that afternoon's fighting, when the whole plain below was tumultuous with devastation, there was, behind the hill from which I was watching, an officer's soldier-servant sitting on a cushion taken from a car, making tea for his master at a little spirit stove, skimming the pages of an old monthly magazine, and whistling Tosti's 'Goodbye,' or playing with a stray mongrel dog, without the faintest sign of any knowledge that such a show of life and death was going on within easy view over his shoulder."

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

4.—BAZENTIN RIDGE

This photograph shows the birth of a trench between the two Bazentins and Mametz Wood. As readers may recall from previous captions, Bazentin-le-Grand and Bazentin-le-Petit Woods were both captured on July 14th, 1916, after which severe fighting continued north and north-west of the latter for upwards of a month. North of Bazentin-le-Petit is some of the highest ground on the Somme.

Occupation of Yenikeui

On October 3rd it was Yenikeui's turn—a village half-a-mile long on the road to Seres, and about 1,000 yards from Zir. The 30th Brigade, 10th Division, directed by Maj.-Gen. Ravenshaw, moved against it between 3 and 4 a.m., the leading battalions being the 7th Royal Munster Fusiliers and 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers under Lt.-Col. Cox of the Dublins. At the same time the 28th Division occupied Mazirko, also on the Seres Road, the 81st Brigade protecting the right flank.

Yenikeui was lightly held, and before seven the whole village was in our hands, at the cost of a few casualties; the new position being dug and wired. Just over an hour later three or four Bulgar battalions counter-attacked from Topalova, but were repulsed by artillery fire. At 12.45 p.m. the village was heavily bombarded, and a new counter-attack was launched, led by an officer on a white charger.

The Dublins in the centre of the line had to endure heavy shelling—from our own batteries as well as the Bulgar, after a forward observing officer had been killed. They fell back to a sunken road which ran through the centre of the village. Small parties of Bulgars entered the northern part.

At 3.45, after a further bombardment, the Bulgars again advanced on the village, this time in close formation. The Dublins withdrew, and carrying-parties, returning from the village, made the retirement appear worse than it actually was. The 6th Royal Irish Rifles were at once sent up to support the Dublins and stop the retreat. British artillery barraged the Seres Road, whereupon the Bulgars also retired. Owing to the artillery observation from the hills either side, Yenikeui was too "hot" a place for Bulgars or British to hold so long as the guns concentrated on it.

At 7.40 p.m. Col. Macpherson ordered his troops to retire to the original line. News of this took nearly half-an-hour to

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reach headquarters, for all the lines had been cut by artillery fire. The order was at once countermanded, but only in time to prevent the withdrawal of one company of the 7th and one of the 6th Dublins.

The Bulgars Give In

The nagging battle for the place went on through the night, and by the early morning of the 4th Yenikeui was ours. The Bulgar forces in the valley, much knocked about and confused by the shelling, "threw in the towel"; and with a fresh division at our disposal we might possibly have driven them back through the Rupel Pass. Four armoured cars, crossing the Orliak bridge, were employed in harassing the enemy.

Three Bulgar officers and 339 other ranks had been taken prisoner; during the next few days we buried another 1,375. Our own casualties totalled 1,137—half 10th and half 27th Division troops. The 28th Division in support on the Seres Road lost 111 from shelling.

On October 5th two companies of the 2nd Cheshires, 84th Brigade, entered a further village—Nevolyen—and dug themselves in, with little opposition, while the Bulgars continued their general retirement on the railway.

Bairakli Djuma was the next objective in this "clean up" of the Struma villages between river and railway. On the 11th, the 1st York and Lancasters, 83rd Brigade, advanced on the place, assisted by a squadron of Surrey Yeomanry, an 18-pounder section of the 21st Brigade R.F.A., and armoured cars. The attack was held up by machine-gun fire from the gipsy village on the southern outskirts, and by Bulgars advancing west from Bairakli and south from Ernekeui. The battalion was compelled to withdraw towards Ormanli, with a loss of 4 officers and 92 other ranks out of a total strength of 320—including 3 officers and 46 other ranks posted as missing.

Small raids and skirmishes followed, in which three bridges were put across the Struma for a renewed attack and minor villages seized as a jumping-off area. On the 31st the 83rd Brigade again advanced on the position, the 84th aiming at Dolap Farm near by. The 2nd King's Own led the right, the 2nd East Yorks the left, while the 1st K.O.Y.L.I. and one company of the 1st York and Lancasters cleared the gipsy village.

ÉTAING CHURCH *Photo: Imperial War Museum.*

When towns or villages are subjected to shell fire, the churches are almost invariably among the first buildings to suffer, for several reasons. In the first place, their bulk makes them an easy target; secondly, their towers and spires are generally suspected of furnishing observation-posts. The wrecked temple in this photograph is the village church of Étaing, which lies on the River Sensée, 16 km. east of Arras.

More Successes on the Struma

This time there was no serious resistance. A counter-attack was driven off by artillery fire, only a small party of Bulgars, who advanced along a wooded gully, approaching to within 100 yards of Bairakli. Three officers and 317 other ranks were taken prisoner.

Dolap Farm was also captured, at a cost of 43 casualties from Bulgarian snipers hidden in copse and orchard. A platoon of the 1st Suffolks occupied Kumli. Topalova was entered, the 31st Brigade penetrating as far as the railway and driving the Bulgars out of Prosenik, while the 29th reached Patrol Wood, but were shelled out. Farther south, too, at the mouth of the Struma, there was a move forward, the 80th Brigade advancing 2,000 yards after naval bombardment from the Gulf of Orfano.

The loss of Bairakli, held by a strong garrison, was the "last straw" to the Bulgars in the Struma Valley. They had been outwitted by superior tactics, three battalions deploying on the west

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of the village at the risk of exposing their flank, while one company with three Vickers guns held the enemy to the south. The demonstration on the south was so successful that most of the garrison knew nothing of the attack on their flank until they were cut off. In taking the village we lost only one killed and three wounded; it was subsequent shelling which brought the total casualties to 5 officers and 48 other ranks.

These successive actions had put the Bulgar mostly where we wanted him—behind the railway, where he would be less of a nuisance. He had lost over 5,000 men, and retired towards Rupel. For a time it looked as if he might abandon the Struma Valley altogether. The British push had been a test of mettle, and the Bulgar knew now with what manner of enemy he had to deal on the Balkan front. In the artillery duel at "chess-board" targets the British gunners had excelled.

Serbs Retake Monastir

In November, on the left of the Allied front, the Serbs recaptured Monastir—a victory of great significance to them—with the assistance of the French, Russians, and Italians. Under the subsequent shelling, the city and adjacent front became the centre of hospital and relief activities wherein British women rendered service which has become part of the history of the campaign.

While superintending the work of the Serbian Relief Fund, which succoured the poverty-stricken Greeks and Serbs who existed there in cellars, Mrs. Harley, a sister of Lord French, was killed by a shrapnel bullet. Elderly, white-haired, this gallant woman of indomitable courage and energy was regarded as a Florence Nightingale of the Balkans; and there were others who served as selflessly—the Hon. Mrs. Massey, wounded by a splinter from an aeroplane bomb in Sakulevo, and Miss Stewart-Richardson, among them.

The Scottish Women's Hospital earned the gratitude of every Serbian in the field, for its personnel worked indefatigably in evacuating and treating the sick and wounded. In Britain to-day there are many middle-aged and elderly women who can look back on service on this front as the most stirring and strenuous experience in their lives—one they can never forget.

On December 1st there was again trouble in the rear, British and French troops being treacherously fired on in Athens. Following a demand, which was ignored, for the surrender of ten batteries of artillery by the Greek Government, Admiral du Fournet landed men from his own and British warships to occupy the city. Although it was understood that there would be no opposition, the detachments were ambushed, the French losing over 80 killed, the British a considerable number. The remainder had to withdraw.

Photo: Keystone.

THE FANE REBUILT

Nothing of great military importance occurred at Étaing until the closing months of the War. Then, on September 2nd, 1918, a British attack was launched on a six-mile front against the Drocourt-Quéant switch-line, and one end of this attack had Étaing for objective. The village was successfully stormed by the 4th Division during the night of September 2nd-3rd. The last severe fighting here had been in September, 1914.

Anti-Venizelist Terrorism

After this affair the armed civilian force of *epistrates* who supported Constantine inaugurated a reign of terror against the Venezelists, shooting many in prison. "We were nearer to war with the Greeks on December 2nd than we had ever been, and were none too well disposed for receiving their attack," declares Mr. Ward Price. "A British monitor was sent to blow up the railway line from Athens to Larissa at the top of the Lamia gulf, where it runs on culverts within range of the sea, but the order was countermanded before it could be executed.

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"Once more King Constantine was let off with a serious talking-to, which took the form that he should withdraw all his army from Thessaly—'above the strength necessary to maintain order'—into the Peloponnese, south of the Corinth Canal. But before this withdrawal could be begun or arrangements made for controlling the process, our position at Salonica was most awkward."

The offensive north of Monastir, after its reoccupation, was stopped, and defensive positions were taken up to cope with the menace from the rear. When Greek royalist forces moved north General Sarrail had to recall troops southwards to deal with them.

The British now settled to winter routine—digging, pumping, revetting trenches, laying stones in muddy ravine tracks, patching roads which threatened to become quagmires, building dug-outs and huts as refuge from bitter weather. There was nothing on any front to compete with the desolation and monotony of the Balkan winter.

It might be brief—say, November to March—but it could be Siberian in temperature at times, with freezing blizzards and winds of razor-edge intensity. Snow capped the hill positions; ravine-bottoms and slopes were frequently covered with ice, and treacherous to the foothold of both man and beast. R.A.S.C. and ammunition column men bringing supplies to the line had to negotiate a great number of these ravines with waggons, limbers, and mules, and sometimes the sloping tracks would be a glissade on which it was almost impossible to get any grip.

Horses and mules slid into the gullies, vehicles were overturned, and perhaps smashed; but somehow, even in the bitterest weather, supplies were forced through, and the columns, dangerously delayed, just contrived to make the return journey before dawn again placed the tracks under observation from the Bulgars' high posts.

Trials of the Water-carrier

One minor but indispensable service which carried extreme hardship with it under the Balkan winter was R.A.M.C. water-duty. The water-supply point for a front-line sector might be a mile or two distant, over narrow plank bridges crossing roaring torrents, and hill-tracks swept all night by machine-gun spray. Water-duty man and transport driver had to make six or more double journeys between nightfall and dawn, with a pair of mules carrying two water-tanks or "packals" each.

The supply point, a fountain deep in some ravine, was surrounded by a glacier of ice in hard weather. The mules would not stand for loading; only after repeated attempts could the heavy packals be hoisted head-high on to the saddle hooks. Where the slippery path skirted a frozen slope, down would go the lot—mules, packals, and men—sometimes making a clatter which attracted a salvo of "whizz-bangs" and machine-gun hail.

Troops in reserve or resting might have their bivouacs washed away in a storm, and be compelled to pace to and fro in torrential rain all night. It was a war with the elements as well as with the enemy in wintry Macedonia.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

COOKERY IN THE BALKANS

A British soldier using a Macedonian oven somewhere near Salonica in November, 1916. The base of the oven is stone, and its upper covering consists of a hard "thatch" of mud and straw. This primitive but far from inadequate contrivance is of a type which had been used by the peasant peoples of the neighbourhood for generations, and it is of interest to compare it with the British-designed baking-ovens illustrated in an earlier Salonica photograph on page 575. In the above view a joint is being cooked

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CHAPTER L

THE SOMME BATTLEFIELDS REVISITED

As has been stated earlier, one of the objects of this work is to describe to men, who by force of circumstance having been prevented from returning to France and Flanders, the battlefields as they are to-day. In the following pages an ex-serviceman describes a recent visit to the Somme, the scene of so much heroism and sacrifice.

To the Anglo-Saxon ex-Service mind "the Somme" denotes a patch of downland roughly confined within the four towns of Amiens, Péronne, Bapaume, and Doullens. To the Frenchman of to-day the Somme is just a department, as Sussex is a county to us; and he sees it as a fertile administrative subdivision of Northern France, sandwiched between the Pas-de-Calais on the north and the Seine Inférieure and the Oise on the south, with a seaboard extending from the mouth of the River Authie, by Berck-sur-Mer, down to that of the Bresle, at le Tréport, and backing on to the Department of the Aisne a few miles short of St. Quentin.

"On" and "In" the Somme

The Frenchman of a year or two ago might have seen nothing to quarrel with in the expression "*on* the Somme," but his compatriot of to-day uses the preposition "*in*" exclusively; for, an it please you, there is no longer a battlefield cutting across that department, and the hessian no longer encloses the Bapaume road in its protecting, drooping panels.[1]

Take Bapaume itself, for a start. To us, late of the B.E.F., this small town of some half-a-dozen streets represents the centre of all our immediate aspirations on the Somme Front; beyond it lay, in 1915–16, the German hinterland, unknown and almost unheard of, with the legendary cities of St. Quentin and Cambrai deep in the background. The Royal Flying Corps knew them, of course, but then the R.F.C. had its business in those parts ("rolling-stock for so many trains in St. Quentin sidings; horse-transport halted two miles north of Le Catelet, head of column at so and so, tail level with the G in somewhere else").

For those of the air squadrons it was mostly a large section of map—flat to the eye, from reconnaissance height, as the proverbial pancake, and studded liberally with curious-shaped woods. They knew all those woods backwards in the Flying Corps, and so did the Balloonatics, swaying slowly but none the less giddily in their waste-paper baskets over Acheux or Bayencourt, or wherever else they chose from time to time to sway.

But all that is dead and done with to-day, and 90 per cent. of those who journey across these rolling acres in pursuit of business or pleasure, and almost as great a proportion of those who live there year in and year out, have little notion of what this land was like so short a while ago. Traces of trench-line still show up here and there, and may indeed be reconstructed in the mind's eye; but it requires a good memory, assisted by good war-time maps, to link the fading landmarks one with another into anything approaching a homogeneous whole. This, of course, applies solely to the actual front-line positions; back areas and forward trench defences not in the firing-line itself have, with rare exceptions, vanished entirely.

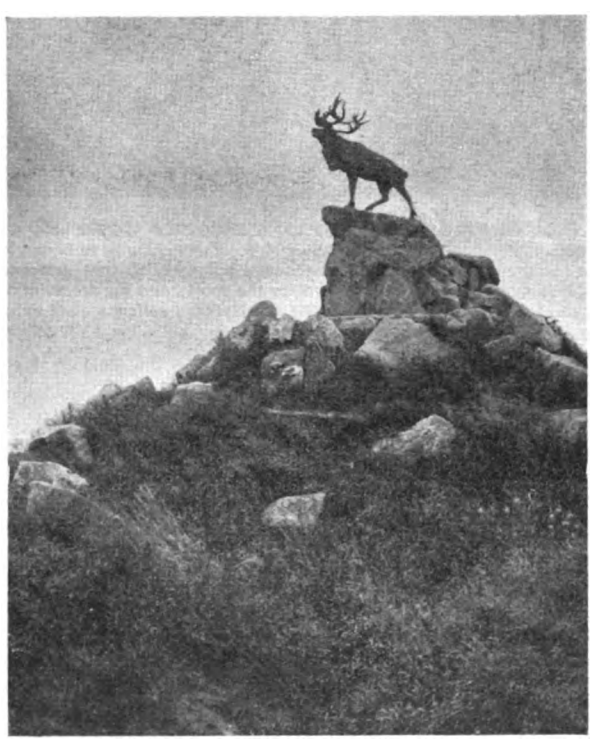

Photo: Dean & Dawson.

TO NEWFOUNDLANDERS

At Beaumont-Hamel on the Ancre, over ground on which fought the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in 1916, a memorial park 84 acres in extent has been laid out, planted with trees from Newfoundland, but preserving all the broken guns, rusty wire, etc., of War days. One of the most impressive features is this huge bronze caribou on his granite mound, below which are recorded the names of the 820 sons of Britain's oldest Empire possession who gave their lives by land or sea, and whose graves are unknown.

A Trade for Human Dregs

How near it all is, on the other hand, may be seen from the piles of rusty shells and jagged fragments turned up day after day, year after year, at each succeeding passage of plough or harrow across the fields. Trade is still being done in this "raw" material, in every village that once upon a time boasted a mention in dispatches; and in such villages you will come across these piles, stacked waist-high against an *estaminet* wall, awaiting the passage of the lorry which will take them away to the furnaces. Dregs of humanity, drawn into the game soon after the end of the War, when prices ruled absurdly high, still eke out an existence in these parts, plodding, down-at-heel, and clothed

[1] During the war years, the majority of roads held under enemy observation were ingeniously screened with curtains of sackcloth (called hessian) secured to tree-trunks and poles; where both sides of a road were under view, these curtains, or screens, were erected on either side.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GOMMECOURT AND GOMMECOURT WOOD

"Then and Now" views of the battered church and ruined château in this village of ill repute have been given on pages 498-499 and 742-743 respectively. Here we show, beyond the shapeless remnants of some of Gommecourt's cottages, all that remained, after the First Battle of the Somme, of the equally notorious Gommecourt Wood. It is somewhat ironical that after the costly and unsuccessful attempt to hold the village on July 1st, 1916, it was entered almost "in peace" following the German retirement of February, 1917.

in tattered dungarees, in the wake of the horse—or motor-drawn—plough.

You may see them, strung out in groups of three or four, stumbling along with heads bent, eyes glued to the ground, each carrying a pitifully slender sack into which, at intervals, after stooping, its owner drops some fragment that he has found. The fund they draw upon is practically inexhaustible. It is doubtful whether as yet more than a small fraction of the total quantity of metal rained down in the course of the First Battle of the Somme alone can have been gleaned.

They will tell you, though, that the harvest no longer "gives" what it gave in the early 'thirties; that the supply itself is becoming exhausted. But they forget that each year they turn over soil turned the year before, and that, in the heavy rains of autumn and winter, the ponderous metal content must surely have sunk below the reach of spike and share.

Still, so long as some remains, so long will the scavengers continue to ply their no longer profitable trade; and the fact that at least once in every month a live shell takes it into its head to go off when struck appears to offer no discouragement. All the more pieces available for the survivors. . . .

In a Notorious Somme Village

A pilgrim in this land of vanished history recently halted in a small village, not very far from Bapaume, in order to fortify himself with food and drink for the remainder of a strenuous day's search for former landmarks. The village is to-day still a household name wherever the English language is spoken, and some of the heaviest fighting ever witnessed on the Western Front obliterated it completely before the War was three-quarters over. In its rebuilt state it is very much what it was before the storm burst over Europe, but so obtrusively new in every detail that it would seem impossible for its inhabitants not to be thinking almost continuously about its earlier sufferings.

Here in Flers, in a corner *café* near the church—one of those churches that appear to be selected from the entries in a competition for the most ingenious design—a good woman agreed to produce a meal that would be warming, sustaining, and inexpensive. Not being the wife of an English country publican, she had no cold mutton-bone, no cold boiled potatoes, no pickles, and no broken wedge of Cheddar cheese; but she managed to assemble a meal with what she had.

There was a huge, deep plate of piping-hot soup, clear as amber, wherein floated minute clippings of some homely, and

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highly fragrant, herb; an omelet—not a tightly-folded, dry-skinned tobacco-pouch alone in insular glory in the middle of its plate, but a heaving mass of golden succulence picked out with the green dice of finely-chopped chervil and parsley; an accompanying dish of *sauté* potatoes, dusted over with grey pepper; a bottle of red wine, with the chill off and the cork loosened; Camembert cheese—not as ripe as some palates prefer it, but Camembert for all that; and black coffee, freshly made and not from a bottle, with its inseparable tiny glass of *Fine* to empty into it. And there was a bill for about 9 francs, with apologies for any observed shortcomings.

She had Heard of Fighting . . .

While the meal was being consumed, the good woman stood by and talked—but not of things past and forgotten. No, it was of further improvements either under way or about to be put in hand. A new bus-service was contemplated, which would make it so much easier for those who at the end of the week wished to visit Amiens without the necessity of going back first to Bapaume. Now that the "*semaine anglaise*"—the British week-end—had been adopted, by decree, in France, it would be possible for them all to visit an up-to-date cinema on a Saturday or Sunday, although the compulsory closing of shops on the Sabbath had distinct drawbacks—except for the shopkeepers themselves.

She had heard that there had been fighting in all these parts, but she herself had come here two years before from Anjou, where the War had not shown itself; and (the inevitable parrot-cry in France to-day) had one not finished with all that—until the next time?

Here at Flers, at 8.40 a.m. on September 15th, 1916, one of the first Tanks to go into action during the War, and the one which penetrated furthest into enemy territory, was observed to be entering the village, with large numbers of our troops following the mammoth as it lumbered forward. An air observer, leaning over the side of his B.E.2c, somewhere not very high above, saw what was taking place, and wrote out a note, which he duly dropped on the appropriate centre. The message read: "*A tank is walking up the High Street of Flers, with the British Army cheering behind.*"

It had been just such a day as that on which, more than twenty years later, the English pilgrim was discussing his omelet, when all those men, New Zealanders and Englishmen, had stridden jauntily past this same spot in a sudden access of light-heartedness.

Photo: Keystone.

AND THIS IS MODERN GOMMECOURT

Like many another Western Front village, Gommecourt would by this time have relapsed completely into the decent obscurity from which the War served unpleasantly to drag it, were it not for the presence of the British cemeteries. The principal of these are two in number: Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery, between Gommecourt and Fonquevillers, and Gommecourt British Cemetery No. 2, near the road to Bucquoy. The former records 739 burials, the latter 1,365.

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They Did not Wait

A short time previously they had been nerving themselves for the inevitable ordeal of house-to-house fighting, than which there can surely be nothing much grimmer ; and then, when the moment came, so did this monster, and all was changed. Flers was not quite empty of the enemy, but it was nearly so, for the Tank's approach had been witnessed from afar, and not many of the defenders thought it necessary to view the thing from close quarters.

In the entirely new world which has come into being " on " the Somme, it would be invidious to single out one particular town, village, or area for special mention. The hand of reconstruction has shown economy in the bestowal of favours, and the touring pilgrim retires to rest at night with his head in a whirl, while he vainly attempts to recall to mind whether it was at Bucquoy that he saw that stiletto-pointed spire, or Achiet-le-Petit.

He knows, more by experience than from observation, that they both have needle-sharp summits ; but the one is stocky and the other slender, and he passed through Puisieux-au-Mont on the way from the first to the second, and remembers having noticed *en route* the distant church of Irles. . . . Within the space of rather less than half-an-hour he had contemplated (including a glimpse, over the shoulder of the Bois du Biez, of the church at Gommecourt) no fewer than four of these apparent competition entries, and his brain is now a kaleidoscopic jumble of pinnacles, flying buttresses, and mock-Gothic afterthoughts. . . .

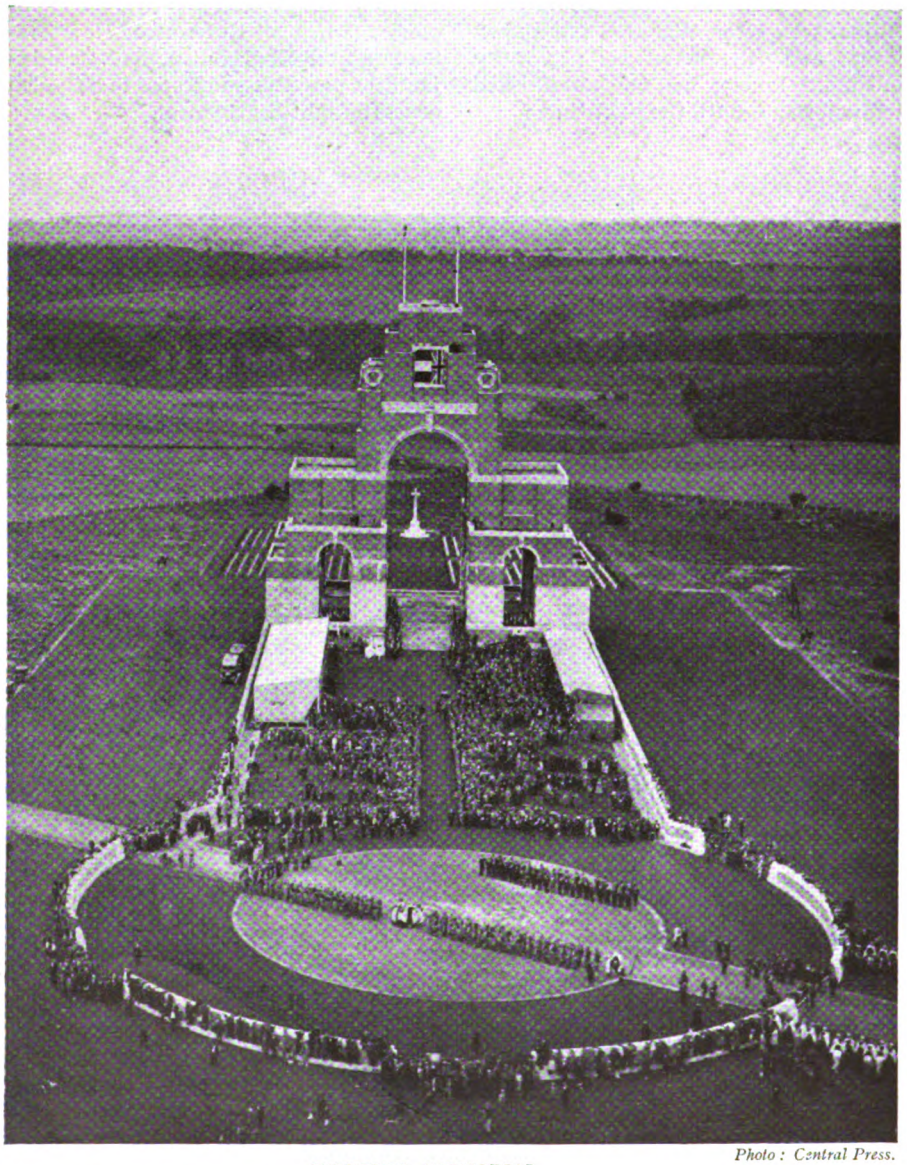

Photo : Central Press.

THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

South of Thiepval village, and 8 km. north of Albert, stands the memorial which, broadly speaking, is to the Somme what the Menin Gate is to Flanders. This aerial view of the massive monument at the time of its unveiling by the then Prince of Wales on July 31st, 1932, gives an idea of its commanding situation on a hill overlooking the Ancre Valley—in the very heart of the " Red Zone," as it has been called.

Striking Village Churches

It is the same further north, although here, with the somewhat wider spacing of the villages, the infinite variety of their churches appears for some reason or another more striking. In the larger towns, the churches lose a part of their prominence ; the humbler buildings which surround them take a hand in the contest, and vie with one another in going one better than their next-door neighbour in grotesqueness.

A chemist's shop will run to an ornamental gable ; the bank alongside will sport an elaborate balcony. The Café du Commerce, over the way, moulds itself in contrasting chastity in sea-green concrete ; and the shoe-shop, next but one to the café, goes all gaudy with black glass in a framework of dull grey—complete with a chalet roof.

Possibly it is no worse than our own present-day confusion of styles which must strike the visitor to our shores so violently as soon as he starts to explore our larger towns—if not before. We may well ask ourselves what would have been the result, in their rebuilt versions, had a number of our own village churches been razed to the ground ; for, whatever we may have against the architecture of some of them, they are all recognisable as churches, and if many of their parishioners pass them by on a Sunday evening and enter a cinema instead, it is not because they have been misled by appearances. On the Somme to-day, perhaps fortunately, the cinemas are few and far between.

One may be forgiven for the expression of such sentiments as the foregoing, if only because to so many of us who fought and endured fear for many months in, under, or above this sector of the Western Front, it can be with no sense of detachment that such changes as these are viewed. It is so difficult for us to forget that all these lush meadows through which the Somme and its tributary stream the Ancre flow, and all these rolling chalk downs, are no longer ours.

Irritation

One returns to them, after an interval of two decades, to find them still as one left them in 1918, with the long

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Photo: Central Press.

KEEPING THEIR NAMES BRIGHT

Washing the panels on which are recorded the 73,412 names of the missing whom Thiepval Memorial commemorates. There are 16 piers bearing these names, which are those of men who fell in the Battles of Albert, Bazentin Ridge, Delville Wood, Pozières Ridge, Guillemont, Ginchy, Flers-Courcelette, Morval, Thiepval Ridge, Ancre Heights, and the Ancre, all in the second half of 1916, and also Miraumont, the Thilloys, Irles, and Bapaume, in 1917. Stone wreaths embellished with oak-leaves encircle the names of all these battlefields.

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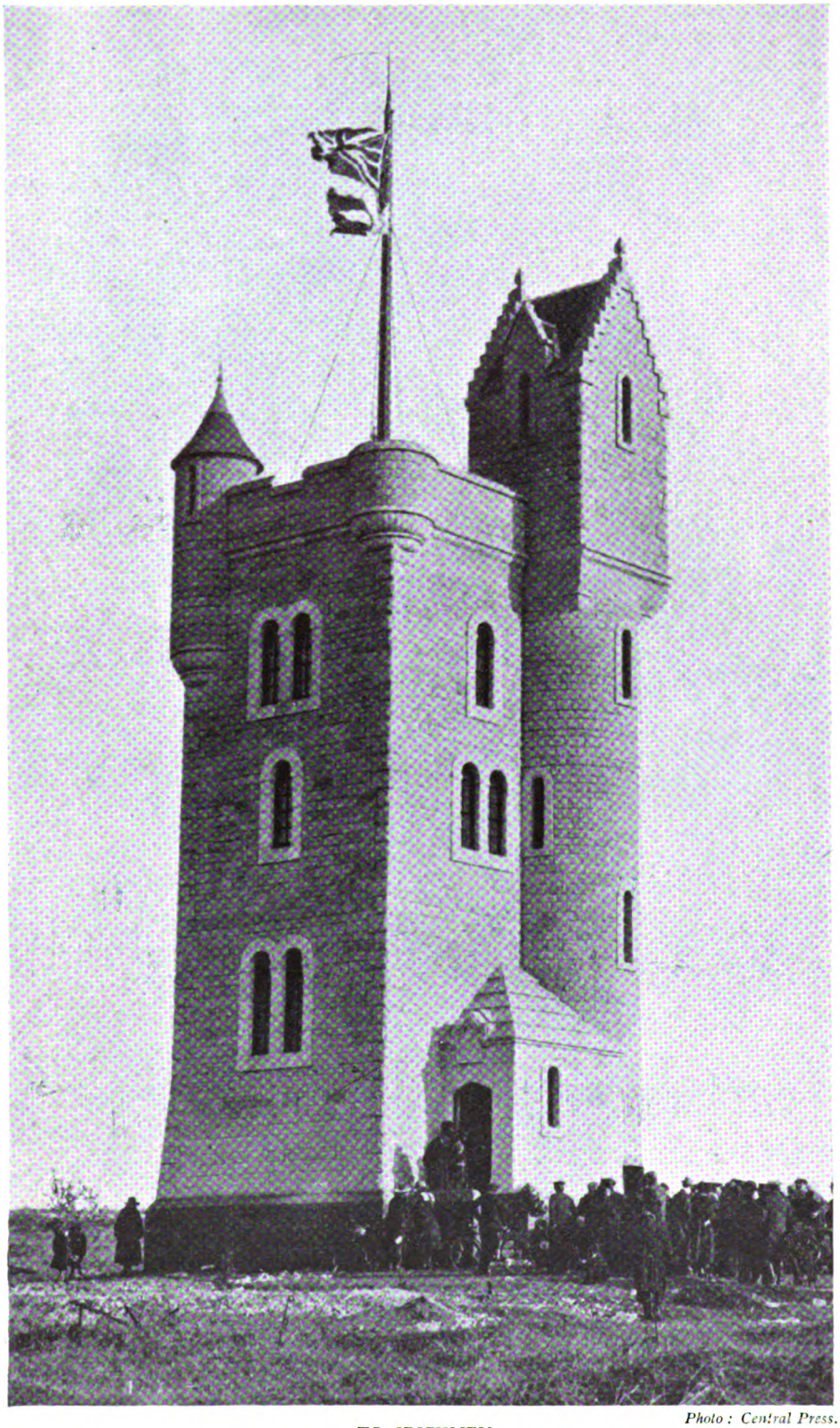

Photo: Central Press.

TO IRISHMEN

The Spirit of Ireland has been most worthily perpetuated by the erection of this Irish tower, at Thiepval, to the fallen of the 36th (Ulster) Division. Raised in September, 1914, this division went to France in October, 1915. It served in 1916 on the Somme, and in 1917 at Messines, Langemarck, and Cambrai. In 1918 it played a prominent part in helping to stem the great German offensive.

grasses waving in the breeze just as they used to do when they were one's own to pluck and chew or cast oneself down upon in those August days of '16 or '17; and one is, not unreasonably, irritated—at least, it does not seem unreasonable—to see the once familiar spires no longer rising above the still familiar landscape, but in their places strange, complicated shapes that jar.

Such towns as Amiens, of course, have changed but little. They were too far removed from the battle-area—for the greater part of the time, at all events—to require complete post-War rebuilding.

But in that city the transformation of that narrow alley, the *Rue du Corps Nu sans Téte*, where Mme Joséphine watched over the gastronomic requirements of the favoured minority—members of the Third, Fourth, or Fifth Army—must ever be regretted by those who knew it as it used to be before the *Rue des Trois Cailloux* was widened, and the corner departmental store erected on the site of another famous eating-house. But the cathedral is still just the same, and the houses in most of the nearby streets are the houses of the War years.

It is when the pilgrim ventures as far as the old front that real irritation is aroused, and perhaps it is at its worst in Albert. Why exactly this should be, it would be hard to say; but many have noticed it. There was a time, not so very long ago, when Albert possessed a certain claim to the affections. It was in ruins then, and the hapless Child hung head-down, as though His Mother sought to hand Him to those who passed below before worse disaster overtook Them both.

Poor, not to say Hideous

There are now no ruins in Albert apparent to the casual eye, and the Virgin stands erect, once more offering the Infant heavenwards from above the towering dome of the basilica; but the cathedral in its rebuilt version is poor to look upon, not to say hideous, and turns the thoughts to the wares set out for sale in our sixpenny bazaars. The only impressive feature about it is its size, and in this it dwarfs anything else for miles round.

The town itself, albeit undistinguished, has risen inoffensively from its ashes. Its houses are just ordinary houses, of the kind one would expect to come across in a place of this sort. The shops are just ordinary shops, without pretensions, and adequate for the town's needs; the two or three hotels provide reasonable comfort at reasonable rates.

In one of them, where the writer recently spent two restful nights, the pilgrim may—at certain seasons of the year—see the son of the house, a young man scarcely half-way through his teens, performing all the duties of door-keeper,

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SOUTH OF ALBERT (1)

Then and Now

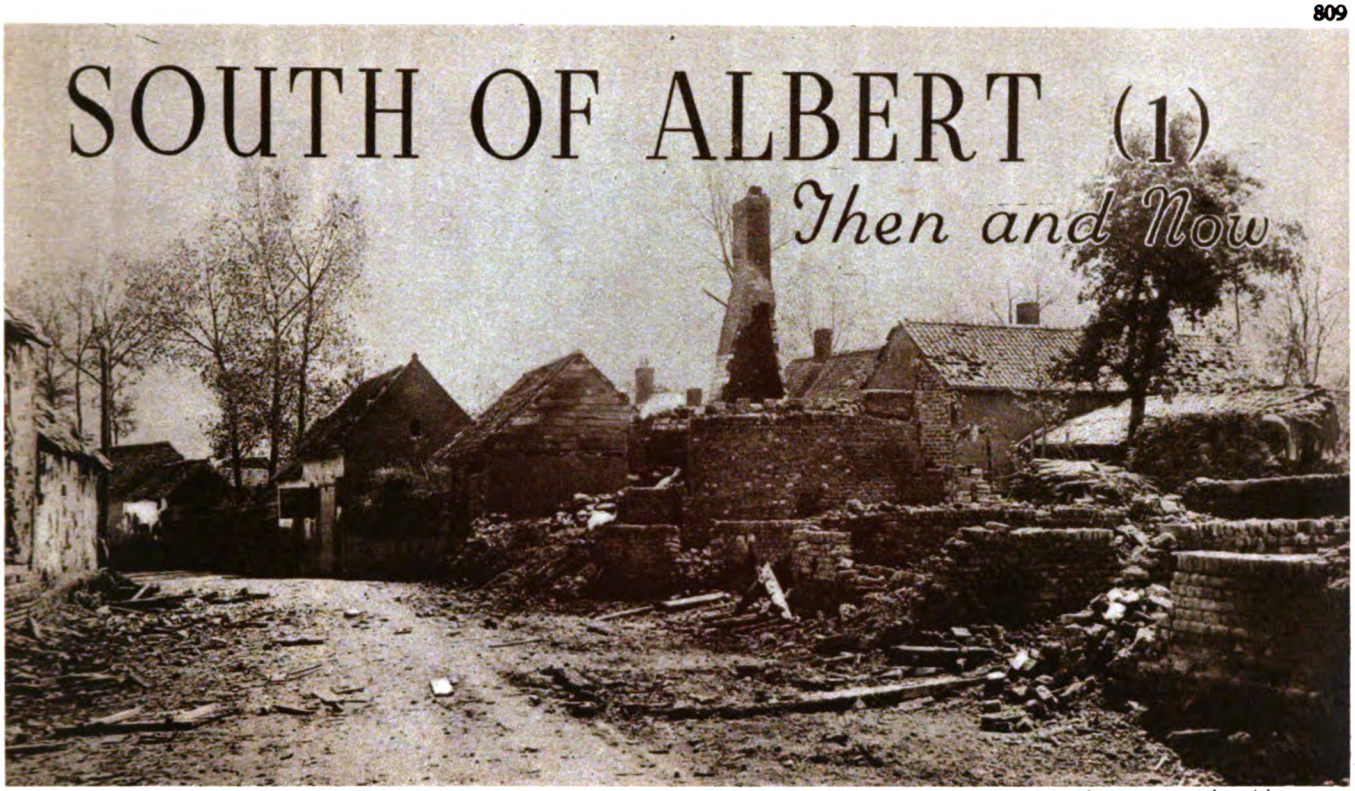

Photo: Imperial War Museum

DELAPIDATION IN TREUX

The village of Treux lies on the east bank of the River Ancre 6 km. south-west of Albert, and opposite Buire. The main Albert–Corbie–Amiens road passes through it, and it is on the Albert–Amiens railway. Its history, like that of all the villages illustrated in this section, is undistinguished, and until the last stages of the German offensive of April, 1918, it was well within our lines. The photograph shows the village a few days after it had been in the front line.

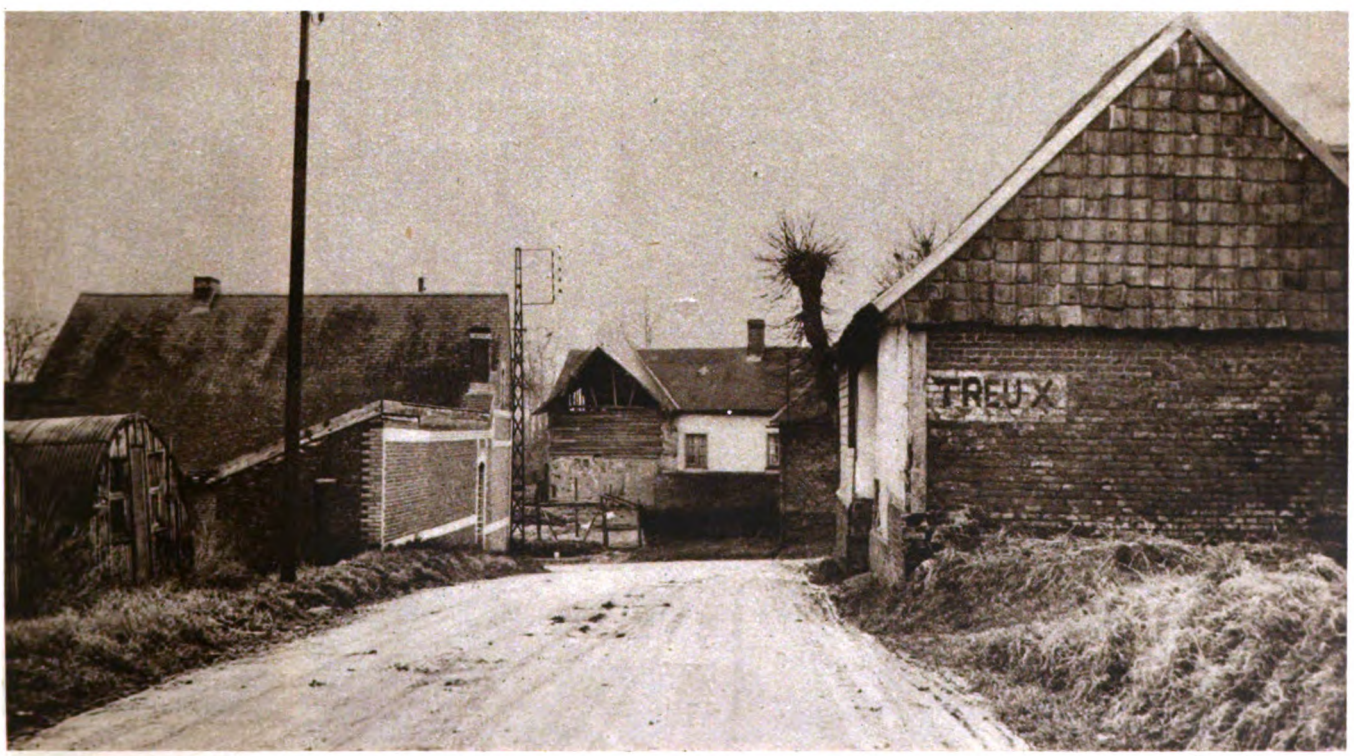

Photo: Keystone

POST-WAR TREUX

The main road referred to above makes two right-angled turns in its passage through Treux, and in each of these illustrations one such corner is visible. This modern view of mainly post-war farm buildings is perhaps chiefly interesting on account of the sign painted on the nearest wall. This wall is not of post-war date, and the sign bears every mark of being a British military indication. Notice also the familiar corrugated iron huts on the left.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

MAIN STREET THEN

For an illustration of sheer untidiness—as opposed to complete effacement—this photograph of the main street in Ville-sur-Ancre would be hard to beat. The bombardment has given to the houses the curious semblance of wattle huts, and the unscathed condition of the few visible trees enhances the effect. The picture dates from the middle of 1918.

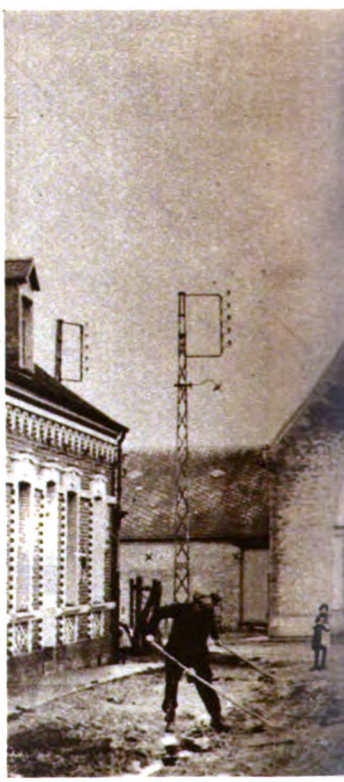
FAREWELL

Described as a " side " view, t
church soon after the capture
Division on May 19th, 1918.
Smyth, shortly afterwards dist
south o

Photo: Keystone

MAIN STREET NOW

Mud is the keynote of modern Ville-sur-Ancre. The village, which is also known as Ville-sous-Corbie, lies immediately north-east of Treux, forming a triangle with that place and Buire on the far side of the Ancre. Although this scene is the same as that shown above, little similarity is to be marked in the buildings.



—AND GREET

Four hundred prisoners wer
which is a date very near t
artillery of the 3rd Australian
at this time, and on one occ
river, over open sig

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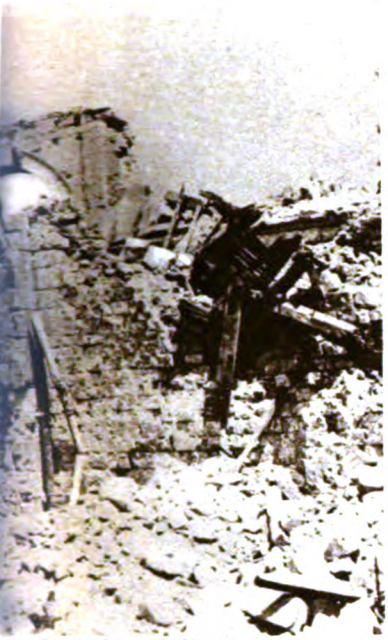

Photo: Imperial War Museum

E CHURCH—
graph shows Ville-sur-Ancre
illage by the 2nd Australian
vision, under Major-General
d itself in another fine attack
court.

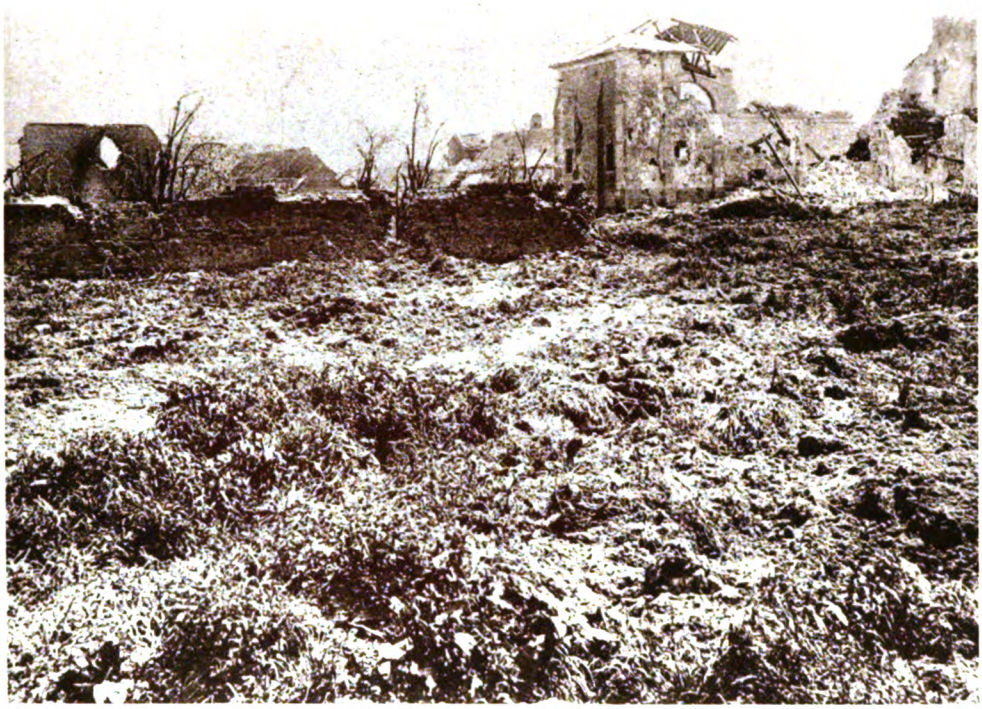

Photo: Imperial War Museum

A FAMOUS WALL

Behind the battered wall seen in the left-hand half of this illustration, a company of the 21st Battalion, 2nd Australian Division, formed up on May 19th, called the roll, and then proceeded to "mop up" the village. The photograph was taken on May 20th, so that the wall is shown exactly as it appeared on the occasion of this episode.

Photo: Keystone

TO ANOTHER
ed with Ville on May 19th,
of the German push. The
was also in the neighbourhood
ngaged the enemy, across the
icting heavy losses.

Photo: Keystone

A NEW WALL TO REPLACE IT

The site can be identified by the position of the church; and some, at least, of the original brickwork is still to be seen in the building on the extreme left. There is now a small British cemetery attached to Ville-sur-Ancre, containing 106 United Kingdom graves. This is situated outside the village, in the direction of Treux.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

PRISONERS IN MÉRICOURT-L'ABBÉ

Méricourt is another name which must be regarded with caution, as there were at least three instances of it on the British front. Méricourt-l'Abbé is the next village after Treux on the Albert–Corbie road, and is some 2 km. further south-west. It is chiefly important for having been a rail-head, and the terminus, during 1915-16, of one of the two leave-train services operating from Le Havre. This picture shows German prisoners passing through Méricourt-l'Abbé on August 8th, 1918.

Photo: Keystone

MELANCHOLY EMPTINESS

Méricourt-l'Abbé just escaped falling to the enemy during his spring push of 1918—but of course by that time it had long ceased to be a rail-head. As regards the leave-trains of earlier years, it may be observed that the twofold service from Le Havre ran to this village and to Aubigny, a long way north behind Arras. On the arrival of a ship from England, two special trains would be found waiting on the quayside, one for each destination. Unfortunately, however, the authorities on occasion failed to make clear which train was which—with results that sometimes surprised the passengers on alighting hours later.

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boots, chambermaid, waiter, *maître d'hôtel*, cashier, and buttons. On the occasion alluded to, the only other visitor was a retired German colonel bent upon revisiting the scenes of the *Grosse Sommeschlacht* of 1916; and Teuton and Briton had an object-lesson in the enviable and not-to-be-equalled versatility of, respectively, former foe and former ally.

Therein, possibly, lies part of the explanation of why the reconstruction of these districts strikes the visitor as always incomplete. The Frenchman is so willing to make do with what he has, or rather not to go right through with a thing to the bitter end. He begins bravely, more bravely as a rule than we, and then, when the main part of the scheme has been put into execution he says to himself in his inimitable way: "*Allons, bon! Ça va comme ça!* . . ."

Transport—Ancient and Modern

How else would one account for the truly extraordinary contradiction in terms to be found hereabouts in the introduction of the Diesel-engined rail-car, and the retention in such towns as Amiens and St. Quentin of a tramway service long since fit for the scrap-heap?

The former mode of transport is superior to anything of the kind in use in England. A "Now" photograph, reproduced on page 155 of TWENTY YEARS AFTER, shows one of these *Micheline* trains passing through Miraumont. Dovetailed in with the normal steam-train service, the rail-car by some cunning manipulation of the time-tables races from town to town, stopping here and there at wayside stations to pick up a handful of villagers, and announcing its arrival at level-crossings by means of a long-drawn wail that echoes among the hills and brooks no delay on the part of the keepers of the level-crossing gates.

It is progress personified; and, by parity of reasoning, the creaking, rattling, bell-ringing tramcars should years ago have left the streets of Amiens, St. Quentin, Lille, and other towns of like social status. But no! They go on, as they have gone on almost from time immemorial, eyesores for all who visit the former Western Front prepared to marvel at the completeness of the change wrought in twenty years.

Albert is very likely the victim of the haste to rebuild which manifested itself in the early post-War days. It is situated among the first badly knocked about villages here reached from the back areas, and the earlier renovators probably regarded it as a suitable

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TO THE K.R.R.C.

There are two memorials on the Western Front to the King's Royal Rifle Corps: one at Hooge, near Ypres, the other at Poziéres, north of Albert. Our illustration shows the latter. Some of the Great War activities of this ancient and famous unit of the Army have already received notice below the photograph on page 221. It may, however, be mentioned in addition that the K.R.R.C., after particularly distinguishing itself on the Somme in 1916, won an equal measure of renown the following year at Lombartzyde, in the extreme north of Flanders.

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jumping-off point. That is as it may be; certain it is that such towns as Bapaume and Péronne, situated farther in, appear to have regrown more leisurely.

The Fishing Season at Bray

Péronne, which one remembers as it was before its almost total destruction, has lost a great deal on the swings which it has not succeeded in gaining on the roundabouts, but on the whole has not come through too badly. A part of the castle still stands, linking the new town with the mediæval; and the Somme still flows slowly past as it always did. They fish in the Somme at Péronne; but for fishing as something rather more serious than a simple pastime, the pilgrim should go back, downstream, to Bray.

Bray-sur-Somme, say in July or August, under a real summer sun, is 100 per cent. fish-conscious. Families travel thither from afar, with one thought uppermost in the minds of all. They do not come just for one day; they devote their week-ends, their summer holiday even, to the capture of the red-finned roach and its humbler brethren, the tench and the gudgeon.

There are cafés in Bray, small enough to look at, but which extend rearwards—one might almost say for miles—where these enthusiastic anglers congregate in droves, and where elaborate four-course lunches are served in closely-following relays as punt and boat, down at the riverside, temporarily disgorge their sun-tanned occupants between the midday hours of 12 and 2.30.

To enter one of these places, with no claim to piscatorial enthusiasm, is as embarrassing as to gate-crash into somebody else's private party. On all sides there is but one topic of conversation. *It is fish, fish, fish*, with its various auxiliary side-topics.

Father sits sipping his Pernod, watching the ice bobbing about as though waiting for a lump to dart downward toward the bottom of his glass as he stirs, and apparently ready to strike with his spoon the instant it does so. Meanwhile he discusses with Mamma, fanning herself with the menu, and also armed with a long green drink, the knotty problem of whether or not their stock of hemp-seed, upon which the family depends for its ground-bait, will outlast the afternoon.

The Persistent Juvenile

Young Jean, temporarily assuaging his thirst (pending the beer to follow) with a glassful of *sirop de Grenadine* and a siphon, unremittingly advances the opinion that they ought to try the water on the other side of a certain shoal; but

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FLEURBAIX AFTER THE TEMPEST HAD WANED

Here we provide two more pictures of this unfortunate village south-west of Armentières, the above photograph of the damaged church having been taken on November 16th, 1918. In 1915 Fleurbaix lay just within the northern boundary of the First Army area, and during the Battle of Aubers Ridge (May 9th, 1915) it was behind the IV Corps front, the 7th, 8th, and 49th Divisions being nearest to it.

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his parents are too concerned with the importance of ample ground-baiting to pay any attention to the small, shrill voice at their side, and Jean's views remain ignored.

As a background to the more immediate din, the proprietor's hoarse admonitions to his sweating staff, rushing to and fro at breakneck speed laden with piled trays, mingle with the clash of crockery and the popping of corks. For a picture of organised chaos and pandemonium it would be hard to beat, and the pilgrim, in his corner, trying his utmost to keep pace with the courses and yet to follow to the best of his French the trend of half-a-dozen different conversations proceeding at nearby tables, has the greatest difficulty in convincing himself that he is really, in the flesh, " on " the Somme.

And the most curious part of it is that, in the streets of the little town itself, there is absolutely no sign of any of the great happenings which have brought fame to the broad waters of the river running so sluggishly by its side. It is just a dead-and-alive small town, with no fishy smell to advertise its astonishing attraction. Perhaps it is only one of many similar, situated on the River Somme. . . .

Office Life in the Field

On a date late in June, 1916, the writer of these notes paid a night visit to the ground immediately west of Albert. Being at that period chained to an office chair some miles from the firing-line, he had some difficulty in organising the visit ; for those were the days when life in an office in the field was very unlike the kind of office-existence led elsewhere.

Work as a rule began before dawn (thanks to the provision of a bed-side telephone connected direct with Brigade Headquarters), and went on without a break until long after sunset. It was then sometimes—by no means always—interrupted for an hour, after which, thanks again to the ubiquitous field-service telephone, it continued far into the depths of the night.

Incredible as it may sound, many of those whose lot it was at times to wield a pen in place of a sword (or its equivalent) look back to-day with something very near to horror at those fiercely strenuous days, spent, within sound of the guns, seated at a table. Scarcely an hour would pass without some question, involving the lives of more fellow-beings than one could possibly meet during the whole of a day, being referred for decision ; and the slightest lack of attention, the most trivial slip, might have consequences of an appalling kind. The cumulative strain of such work was, therefore, considerable ; and although one laughed it off at the time, it ended, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, by getting the upper hand.

As some proof of the foregoing, it may be mentioned that the one excursion referred to was, in the writer's case, the sole break in a period extending over rather more than a month, and that so unorthodox was it in the circumstances surrounding his life at that time, that it stands out to-day in the curious light of an important event.

Progress along the main Amiens—Albert road became impossible shortly after passing beyond Lavieville, partly owing to enemy shelling, which had left its imprint on the highway in the shape of deep craters, and partly because a military policeman, stationed in a shallow dug-out at a minor crossing, said so. He did not know why the guns

Photo : Keystone.

PROUDLY SOARING

Fleurbaix's new church belongs very much to the category of those possessing needle spires. There are no less than four British War cemeteries near Fleurbaix, three of them begun in 1914. One marks the site of the well-known Le Trou Aid Post, another that of " Eaton Hall " headquarters and dressing-station. In all, these burial-grounds contain the graves of 2,458 United Kingdom, 942 Australian, and 144 Canadian, Indian, and New Zealand fallen.

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were so active that night, and did not much care. He was aware, of course, that we were preparing something big in the way of an offensive in these parts—everyone was aware of that, including the enemy; but the secret of the opening date had been well kept, and it is doubtful whether the rank and file realised, on the morning of the 1st July, that their attack of that date had been postponed from the originally-fixed 29th June.

The Somme Bombardment, 1916

It was now very close to that 29th June; and 50 per cent. of the shelling at present proceeding was in preparation for the infantry assault so soon to be launched. It was a clear, starlit night, and the view, looking down on to Albert and up the rising ground beyond, was like a scene from Dante's *Inferno*. Batteries, dug-in in the fields on either side of the road, came to life without warning, many of the guns sending over star-shells; while from over the horizon on the further side of the town the German gunners retaliated at intervals.

The whole sky, as far as the eye could reach from north to south, was lit up, blacked out, and lit up again in an unending symphony of light, with its attendant roll of reverberating thunder. To a visitor who knew nothing of such things, the impression would have been of a giant battle in full progress; and yet, beneath that avalanche of noise, under that huge archway of dazzling brilliance, the greater part of two rival hosts actually slept, conscious that their hour of trial was yet to come.

Even to the writer, for whom there was no great novelty in the spectacle, the comment of the military policeman, who had left the shelter of his dug-out to join him at the side of the road, appeared unjustifiably slighting. Watching a particularly brilliant star-shell quench itself as it struck the ground below Thiepval Ridge, this worthy yawned, and, as a battery of 18-pounders rapped out a cascade of din from a field not 50 yards away, remarked: "*They're not* puttin' much backbone into it to-night, are they?"

In point of fact, he was completely right, as any visitor to this part of the Somme can see for himself. It is necessary only to journey on through Albert, and to take the marked turning to the left in Pozières; the proof will then be visible before modern Mouquet Farm is reached, for the Thiepval Memorial, with its 73,412 names of those who fell in the Battles of the Somme, dominates everything in the neighbourhood; and all but a comparative few of these names are of men who died on or after July 1st, 1916. . . .

It is curious, by the way, to note that Mouquet Farm, a farm more closely linked with our fighting in France than any other similar homestead, should have been owned—as it is owned again to-day—by a Belgian. The van den Drieche family has rebuilt the place with typical Flemish thoroughness. The last air-photographs of it taken during the War show what seems to be a piece of trampled Gruyère cheese, and nothing else.

Photo: Imperial War Graves Commission.

DELVILLE WOOD

Delville Wood Cemetery lies opposite Delville Wood and the South African Memorial, on the road from Longueval to Ginchy. Within this wood of evil fame the 2nd, 14th, 17th, and especially the 9th (Scottish) Divisions were all heavily engaged in 1916, but none paid a higher price than the handful of South Africans who were the first to capture it (July 15th). The cemetery to-day contains the graves of 5,206 United Kingdom fallen, 151 South Africans, 81 Australians, 29 Canadians, 19 New Zealanders, and 3 men of unknown nationality.

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CHAPTER LI

TOWARDS THE HOLY LAND

The reverse at Romani put an end once and for all to Turkish ambitions in the direction of Egypt. Furthermore, the Turks were now obliged to fall back upon the defensive as General Murray's forces embarked upon the slow but methodical march eastwards over the old and historic caravan route that leads to El Arish, Rafa, and Palestine. This desert march was a leisurely affair; indeed, the drifting sands of Sinai imposed slow going, but behind the protective screen of troops, horse and foot, engineers laboured to construct the railroad, the pipe-line, and the wire road that in the months to come were to prove of such value to the army in the Holy Land. The successful crossing and clearing of Sinai should be remembered to the credit of General Murray, who, after laying the foundations of the Palestine campaign, was deprived by ill-fortune before the walls of Gaza of the fruits of his labours.

After the Battle of Romani, fought on August 4th, 1916, Murray decided to occupy El Arish and clear Sinai of the enemy. He divided his forces east of the Canal into two parts: the Eastern Force occupying the trench-line under Sir Charles Dobell, fresh from his conquest of the Cameroons, a man once described as having a heart as large as a tram-car; and the Desert Column, consisting of the 42nd, 52nd, and Mounted Divisions, under Lieut.-General Sir Philip Chetwode, whose experience had included the First Battle of Ypres, where his cavalry under tremendous pressure had held the line from Wytschaete to Hollebeke and spent 17 successive days in the trenches.

A Peaceful Autumn

The force badly needed rest after its sufferings from the severe conditions which prevailed at and during the Battle of Romani. No serious operations, therefore, took place during the autumn of 1916. The railway was steadily pushed forward at the rate of 15 miles a month. The 6-in. pipe was replaced by a 12-in. pipe, weighing 5,000 tons, which arrived from America in September; and the troops interspersed training and the control of the desert with recreation and bathing.

In spite of all the various modern adjuncts, camels—the old "ships of the desert"—remained as indispensable as ever. No less than 72,000 of them, together with 172,000 drivers, were employed during the campaign. The men in their long garments sometimes marched 50 miles a day. The beasts have always been marvels of endurance, and they bore the strangest of loads: water-pipes twice their length, timber-stacks double their height, and bunches of barbed wire that made them look like lanky hedgehogs. The fighting-camels carried such quantities of water, food, and ammunition as to give their riders a circuit of action of five days in desert country, which is about two days more than can normally be expected of cavalry.

Napoleon had also made use of camelry. His camels took two men each, back to back. He expected them to charge, and carried out experiments to test the comparative value of lances 15 ft., 18 ft., and 21 ft. in length. Two men on a camel, looking fore and aft and each trying to wield a 21-ft. lance, must have provided a comic rather than a terrifying spectacle. One French writer declares that the camel carried ten musketeers; but the mirage must have played strange tricks with his vision.

The British soldier, whether from the Old Country or the Dominions, had no love for the camel who was his daily, almost his hourly companion. He recognised his value, but disliked his supercilious aloofness, which chilled all intimacy; and he disliked still more his guttural, bubbling noises. He was able to make a pet of anything else—not only of the horse, the mule, the donkey and the goat, but even of such apparently intractable creatures as the praying-mantis, the tortoise, and the lizard.

An Unaffectionate Pet

One man used to take about a horned viper, to whose tail he had, by some concert of skill and daring, managed to attach a string. He was never, however, able to inspire affection in his protégé, and was eventually lucky to be quit of him with the loss of a finger. Some of the rarer species were sent to the Zoo at Cairo. Among them a desert-rat, travelling by post, arrived at her destination with a litter of six. Strange men and strange animals were a source of never-failing interest to our soldiers.

The Lancashire regiments, according to their divisional history, found that even the camel-men—those most depressed and depressing of mortals—would afford entertainment. Round their camp-fires at night they would shed their lugubrious aspect, as they compared thefts and totted up the savings which were to give them, on their leave, a gay time with the ladies in Cairo. The "Gyppy" labour corps, the mule-drivers, and the donkey-men too, had all their good points. And to all these "benighted heathen" the Lancastrian displayed the kindly contempt he reserved for those who had never had the fortune to see Bolton Wanderers play Manchester United.

The Australian Horse took turns of rest along the Canal. There they would see the more severely wounded of the Australian infantry passing homeward from France; and many a gibe would pass between these old cronies, the warrior from the Western Front thinking the Eastern campaign to be very easy money. Thus, digger hailing Light-Horsemen: "'Ullo, you blokes, bin 'aving a good picnic out 'ere?" L.H.: "Aw, not too bad; just bin moppin' up the —— that cleared you off the Peninsula."[1]

Among the passengers through the Canal at this time was the Rajput Prince, Sir Pertab Singh—the life-long friend of Lord Roberts, and the saviour of many of our women and children during the Mutiny. He was on his way for the second time to visit the Indian squadrons in France, and warmed up at the scenes of war. So he passed to fret his soul out with his Lancers, waiting for the great cavalry charge on the Western Front that was never to come.

[1] *Nile to Aleppo*, p. 8.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

TO THE IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS

This exceptionally graceful little memorial to the fallen of the Imperial Camel Corps is to be found in the Thames Embankment Gardens, London. Inscribed on the stone base of the monument are the names of the principal actions in which the Corps participated between 1916 and 1918. Totalling 18 in all, these include Romani, El Arish, Magdhaba, the first two Gaza battles, Sana Redoubt, Beersheba, Hill 265, Amman, Jordan Valley, and Mudawara.

Shaking off Suburbia

During these days of methodical progress, the British soldiers were shaking off their urban and suburban habits. They were learning to scout, to judge distance, to pack a camel in quick-time in the dark, and to find their way across-country by day and night. The great qualities were there, but buried deeply under a mass of tradition and convention, which the free air of the desert and a competition in wits with the Bedouin were combining to dislodge.

Here is a picture of the forward movement by a civilian observer. "What struck me most was the orderliness of everything. Each column moved in its own route ; there was no confusion, no clashing of columns, no stoppage to allow other transport to pass. If every hundred yards or so there had been finger-posts inscribed 'This way Bde.,' 'This way Cavalry,' the order could not have been more perfect. Flank-guards were out, of course. You could see their dust through the shimmering haze away to the south, while 10,000 ft. in the blue vault above us, you could pick out our airmen denying a place for enemy eyes to detect our movements. It was very grand, and the perfection of preparation gave us high hopes." [1]

On the lines of communication a vast organisation had been built up. Standing camps, furnished with comfortable huts, had been erected. Tanks, reservoirs, wireless-stations, railway-sidings, aerodromes, crowded the desert ; while, at right angles to the general trend of movement ran the successive lines of entrenchment which had been dug and wired by the troops.

Murray had not yet obtained all the troops he wanted. He had asked for five divisions and had been allotted only four, and they were 6,000 men under strength. He had, indeed, two mounted brigades more than he had demanded, but their value in direct defence was not great ; and the policy was still defensive, namely, to protect Egypt with the main force at El Arish and an arm reaching toward El Kossaima.

[1] Massey, *The Desert Campaign*, p. 91.

Onward to El Arish

"If the problem had been solely the defence of Egypt, the position at Bir el Abd, which had now been established, would have constituted the limit of advance necessary, since all the water-bearing area was now in British possession.

"Sir A. Murray considered that something more was demanded of him. He could at least prevent the withdrawal of enemy troops from Syria and Palestine to other theatres. He was, therefore, of opinion that, though he had four divisions only, instead of the five for which he had asked, his advance on El Arish should continue." [1]

There was a good deal of play and counterplay about plans at this time. Mr. Lloyd George, the new Prime Minister, was anxious for a spectacular success such as the capture of Jerusalem. On the other hand, Sir William Robertson, the Chief of the General Staff, wanted to keep the main effort in France. Hence promises of reinforcement were made, cancelled, re-made, and withdrawn, and Murray had eventually to carry on with the troops available.

Between El Arish and El Abd there was no water ; and the Turkish positions at El Arish, Magdhaba, and Rafah covered all the wells on the enemy's side of the waterless gap. The railway, however, had reached a point within 26 miles of El Arish ; and, though the pipe-line was only a few miles beyond Romani, water was transported in railway tank-waggons from pipe-head to rail-head. From there onwards, for the move to El Arish, an army of camels were to carry the necessary water.

On December 20th, 1916, just as all preparations for the start were complete, news was received that the Turks had evacuated El Arish. The Anzac Mounted Division and the Imperial Camel Brigade were sent forward that day. Marching through the night, they surrounded the village at dawn and occupied it. The ride was a memorable one, for the desert was left behind.

[1] *Official History*, i, p. 248.

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An Arabian Night's Entertainment

"In the magical, idyllic atmosphere of a Sinai night in December, with the heavens thickly sprinkled with stars peculiarly brilliant and seemingly very near, the riders rejoiced as their horses slipped suddenly off the deep sand of the dune on to the wide, firm flat which flanks the great Wadi el Arish. 'That night,' said General Cox, of the 1st Brigade, 'will always seem to me the most memorable of the whole campaign.' The hard going for the horses seemed almost miraculous after months of sand; and, as the shoes of the horses struck fire, on the stones on the bed of the Wadi, the men laughed with delight." For them no more blistering heat, no more blinding sandstorms.

The 52nd Division reached El Arish on December 22nd. At once a pier was built to reach deep water; and, on the 23rd, ships had already begun landing stores there, thus greatly facilitating the supply-problem. From this beginning, great use was made of supply by sea during the remainder of the campaign, between 2,000 and 3,000 small ships, under naval protection, being employed for this service continuously in spite of depredations by submarines.

The Imperial Camel Brigade had only just received its official baptism when it marched to El Arish. It had operated in embryo state against the Turkish left during the Romani battle, and had since been re-organised to consist of 18 companies, of which 10 were Australian, 2 from New Zealand, and 6 British, together with a British section of 8 machine guns. Contained in the brigade also, and commonly known as the "Bing Boys," was the Hong Kong and Singapore battery of mountain guns, manned by Sikhs and Punjabi Mahommedans under British officers. It could put into line 1,600 men, and was thus equal, in rifle strength for battle, to two mounted brigades.

The companies were organised at first in 3, and later in 4, battalions. Most of the Australians were drawn from infantry units, when the latter were in Egypt *en route* between Gallipoli and France. That they contained a good many "hard doers" in their ranks may be gauged from the following extracts from the unofficial history of the force:

"They added much to the gaiety of Cairo, and there were many wild escapades in which they took a leading part. The drivers and conductors of the white trams running from Cairo to Heliopolis suffered as much as anyone else. Nearly every night there was a stoppage of the service because the Cameliers would not pay their fares on the homeward journey. After a heated argument, a conductor would be pushed off the tram and the driver would follow him. Then a volunteer driver from among the Cameliers would make a non-stop run to Abbasia. Those were wild rides, with gongs clanging as the teams proceeded at full speed across intersections, with natives, fowls and donkeys scattering in all directions to escape injury." [1]

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, p. 3.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TYPES

A motley collection of Arabs and others photographed at El Arish in February, 1917. This place, on the railway and Mediterranean coast of Sinai some 45 miles south-west of Gaza, was the largest settlement in the peninsula, and of considerable military importance. Raided by the British on May 18th, 1916, attacked from sea and air a week later, and several times bombarded from the air during subsequent months, it was evacuated by the Turks on December 21st, 1916, British and Empire troops entering it a day later.

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Laconic Comment

The adjutant—a Regular—enquired of the author of the history if there were still bushrangers in Australia. The latter replied in the negative. "I quite believe you," muttered the adjutant grimly. "They've sent them all over here to join the bally camel corps."

One other incident of their early days merits record. "It was customary to call the roll in the huts every night at 9.30 p.m. On this particular night, a sergeant had returned from Cairo in a hilarious mood. Dressed only in boots and singlet, and carrying a roll-book in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, he began his inspection of the huts. Entering the first hut, he looked round for some place to put the candle while he called the roll. Sighting one of the men asleep on his back, he tipped the candle, poured the hot grease on the sleeper's forehead, and stuck the candle upright in it.

"With a wild yell the sleeper awoke; and the next moment a sergeant, with a flimsy singlet fluttering in the wind, fled in the direction of the near-by Mokattam Hills closely pursued by another lightly-clad Camelier. The following morning both of them showed on their faces the marks of a fierce fistic encounter under a starlit Egyptian sky." [1]

The troops were now happy. Three days a week, each man would get a pound of bread cooked the previous afternoon in Qantara. Wells dug by the seashore yielded quantities of excellent water. The climate was delightful. The scenery had markedly improved. On the left, the sea; ahead, patches of cultivation; the sprouting corn; a few fig-trees in the village; all these gladdened the eyes of soldiers of green lands who had been desert-dwellers for nine months on end.

The footslogger touched high-water mark of ecstasy—that is, he almost ceased to grumble. For him desert life had been peculiarly damnable. For habitation he had had to scrape a hole in the hot sand, with a ground-sheet only as protection from the sun, and myriads of flies for company. When not marching, heavily burdened, through deep sand, his lot had been to dig and wire, wire and dig, the live-long day. At times his daily allowance of water had been reduced to half-a-gallon for washing, cooking, and drinking combined, at a season when the native "Gyppy" was accustomed to *drink* 3 to 4 gallons a day.

Advantages of Being an Equestrian

His mounted comrades had, indeed, endured many of the same hardships, but they did roam far afield; they were

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, pp. 10–11.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A STREET IN COURCELLES

The War history of Courcelles-le-Comte is closely bound up with that of Achiet-le-Petit, from which it is distant some few kilometres. Courcelles lies north of Achiet, approximately midway between Ablainzeville and Ervillers. The troops of the IV and VI Corps who captured Achiet-le-Petit on August 21st, 1918, took Courcelles-le-Comte at the same time. This constituted the second stage of our attack, Beaucourt, Bucquoy, Ablainzeville, and Moyenneville having been reached and passed in the first stage.

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Photo : Keystone.

AWAITING ROAD-REPAIRS

The inaugural attack in the Battle of Bapaume, of which the events referred to on the previous page were the continuation, was launched on a 10-mile front north of the Ancre by General Byng's Third Army, assisted by 280 Tanks. Courcelles-le-Comte is so called to distinguish it from Courcelles-au-Bois, near Mailly-Maillet, whose cemetery is fraught with such tragic memories of the March Retreat. Courcelles-le-Comte also has a small cemetery, containing 108 British graves.

carried ; they did have, if not change of scene, at least a continual change of place ; and they did have an occasional brush with the Turks whom the foot-slogger hadn't sighted since Romani ; they did not, in short, have to suffer boredom on top of other evils. This disparity of conditions fortunately created no ill-feeling between the foot-soldier and the mounted man, such as had existed of yore in Kléber's Napoleonic army, where the infantry would hardly allow the cavalry to come near them, so furious were they at the seemingly more pleasant life of a man on a horse.

The French soldiers of those days fared as a whole much worse than the British a century later. They had no pipe-line to help them out, and were eating camels, mules, dogs, and even snakes, till they captured stores from the Mamelukes near El Arish. They became mutinous, and actually reproached Napoleon—an action they never repeated, even during the retreat from Moscow. They also treated their officers abominably—witness the sad tale of the charger of Commandant Pépin. "He missed his horse from the line one morning, and seems to have concluded his men had been dining at his expense." When he reproached them, the only answer he got was that the horse was vicious and might have killed him ; so it was better eaten ![1]

Beyond El Arish lay Palestine—the Land of Promise, of laughing valleys thick with corn. The British soldier did not, indeed, view its fertility as did Moses looking across Jordan from the heights of Moab. But he did share with the Israelite leader the joy of leaving behind the sandy wastes which had been so long their common foe. Palestine was a country suited to the employment of all Arms. Cavalry was there to win undying fame, but infantry and guns could, and would, play a tremendous part.

The mounted troops were not given much time to enjoy the scenery. Chetwode landed at El Arish on the 22nd, and issued orders at once for a move on Magdhaba—a village some 25 miles up the Wadi el Arish, to which the Turks were believed to have retired.

In French Footsteps

The force, of which Chauvel had the command, consisted of the Cameliers and the Anzac Mounted Division, less the 2nd L.H. Brigade and two batteries. It marched alongside the Wadi—a broad river-bed which traverses almost

[1] *Marching Thro' Sinai.* R. A. Journal.

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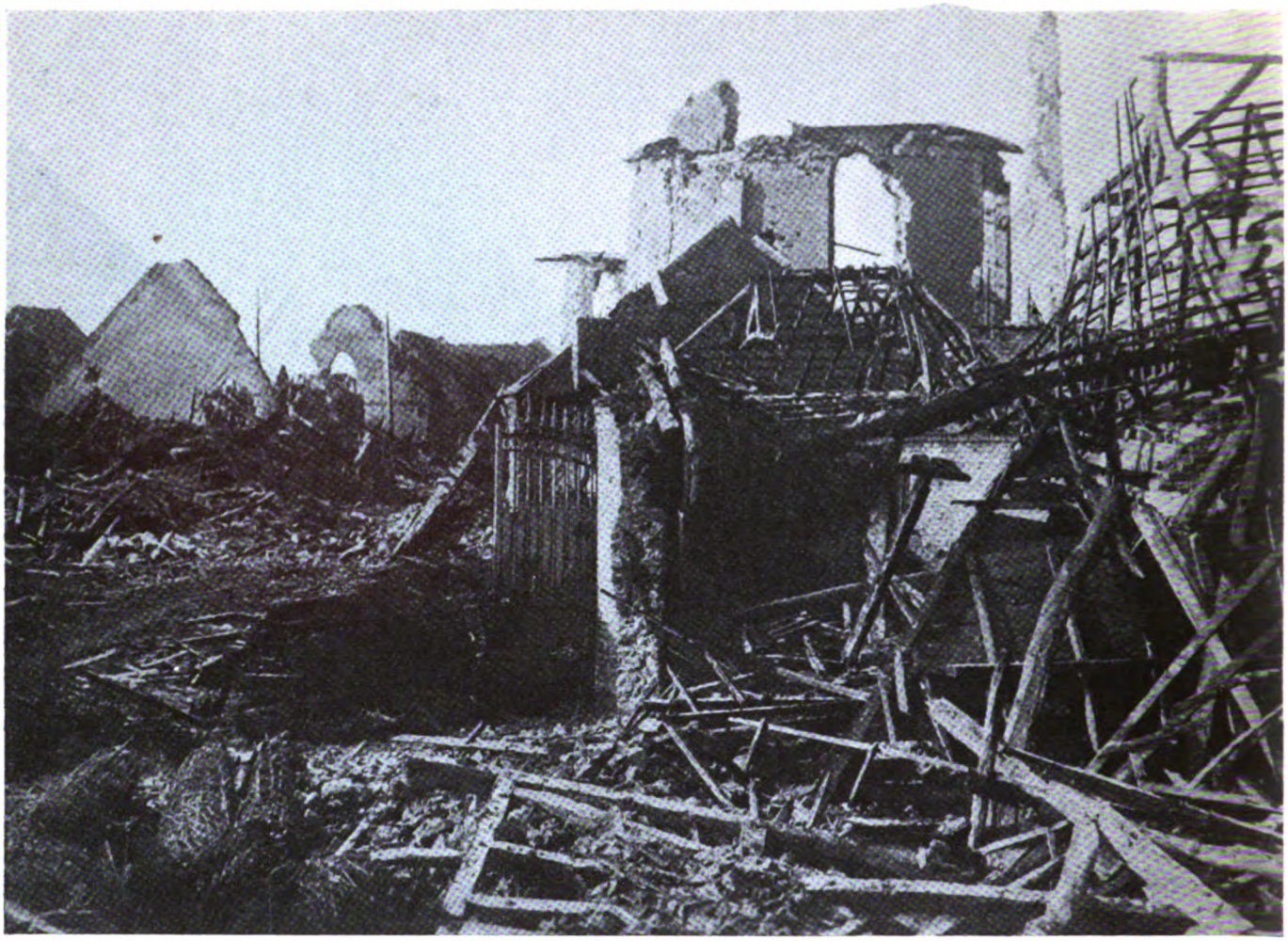

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RIENCOURT IN RUINS

Riencourt-lez-Cagnicourt and Riencourt-les-Bapaume both figured in the fighting of 1918, and the former also crept momentarily into the historical canvas during the Battle of Arras in 1917. In that campaign, troops of the 4th Australian Division, attacking alongside those of the 62nd Division, and preceded by Tanks, penetrated the enemy positions as far as the village on April 11th, but were unable to hold their gains.

the whole of Sinai, and is known in the Bible as the River of Egypt. In earlier days Reynier had—also by night—marched his starving French troops up the same valley, though only for 3 miles, to win a brilliant victory over the Mamelukes, and therewith abundance of food.

Chauvel reached his objective at dawn, and made a reconnaissance. So far as he could judge, in the misty air, the Turkish position lay astride the Wadi, and consisted of about 6 redoubts, for the most part connected with one another, and covering an area of some 2 square miles. He at once made his dispositions. He sent Chaytor with the N.Z.M.R. Brigade and the 3rd L.H. Brigade to attack from the north. He ordered the Cameliers in from the west, and kept the 1st L.H. Brigade in reserve. The signal for the advance was to be the opening fire of the artillery, consisting of the Inverness and Somerset batteries and the "Bing Boys."

By 9.25 a.m. Chaytor was established 3 miles north of Magdhaba. He despatched the 10th A.L.H. Regiment of the 3rd L.H. Brigade to ride, by Aulad Ali, wide round the enemy, in order to cut off his retreat to the south and south-east. This regiment was just in time to capture some 300 Arabs, who were beating an early retreat. Our airmen, seeing the Arabs, reported that the enemy was making off and might yet escape the enveloping movement.

The situation at that moment was that Chaytor had just sent the Canterbury Regiment against Hill 345, and the Wellington Regiment against Magdhaba, and that the Cameliers were in action opposite No. 1 Redoubt, but not making much progress. Chauvel's reaction to the report was to order Cox, with the 1st L.H. Brigade, to move straight on Magdhaba. The brigade rode at once towards its objective. Met by shrapnel fire, it changed from a trot to a gallop. It was then brought to a halt by heavy small-arm fire.

The Attack is Launched

Cox wheeled to the right, dismounted his men in a subsidiary wadi, and then, at 10.30 a.m., began an attack with the 3rd A.L.H. along the bed of the main wadi to the right of the Cameliers. About noon, Chaytor threw in the 8th and 9th A.L.H. between the two New Zealand regiments. The Australians advanced at a gallop, and dismounted under heavy fire to advance against No. 5 Redoubt.

The resistance was strong; and it was now clear that the Turks were not retiring as had been reported. The redoubts were on convex ground, and gave each other good mutual support. The country over which the advance had to be made, especially in the west, was devoid of cover. Progress was therefore very slow, though excellent support was being given by the Somerset and Inver-

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ness batteries and by the "Bing Boys."

At 1.15 p.m., the field troop which had been sent to reconnoitre for water along the wadi reported none available. Unless Magdhaba could be taken, there was, therefore, no water nearer than El Arish —23 miles away. Seeing no immediate prospect of success, Chauvel sent a wire to Chetwode giving him an account of affairs, and proposing withdrawal. Then, anticipating approval, he issued the following order to brigades: "As enemy is still holding out and horses must be watered, the action will be broken off and the forces withdrawn. Each brigade will be responsible for its own protection during the withdrawal."

This order was handed to Brig.-General Cox (commonly known as Damn-all Cox) just as he was making arrangements for a final charge. "Take the damned thing away," said the Light-Horse brigadier, "and bring it me in half an hour again." His judgment was correct. The various separated bodies were all closing on their objectives.

The Climax of the Fight

Then, suddenly, the 3rd A.L.H. and two companies of the Cameliers, who had been slowly working their way up the wadi, rose to their feet, cheering, and charged home together at No. 1 Redoubt. The assault was an inspiring spectacle. The troops suffered heavily, but they won through; and that was the climax of the fight.

Chauvel had now no thought of withdrawal. The 10th A.L.H., under Major Robertson, had enjoyed an exciting time. Sweeping round to the east after making their bag of Arab prisoners, they crossed the wadi and turned north against Redoubts Nos. 3 and 4, galloping from covered position to covered position, and opening fire, dismounted, between gallops. One party of 40 troopers charged at a redoubt, and, finding it occupied by 400 men, galloped on through and beyond it.

"As they rode away from the trenches, Martin's horse was killed, and the young officer was shaken and dazed by the fall. Cox spurred on with his men to the cover of a ridge. Then, accompanied by Sergeant Spencer-Gwynne, he gallantly rode back under intense fire, took Martin on his saddle and galloped with him to safety."[1]

Royston, galloping about as usual in the thick of the fight, cantered up to a trench and was instantly covered by five enemy rifles. The old fighter excitedly raised his cane and, knowing no Turkish, shouted at the riflemen in

[1] *Australian Official History*, p. 223.

Photo: Keystone.

RIENCOURT REINSTATED

Riencourt-lez-Cagnicourt lies about 3 km. north-west of Quéant, and 13 km. north-east of Bapaume. Riencourt-les-Bapaume is situated 3 km. south-east of Bapaume. By a coincidence, these namesakes were captured, in our final advance, at almost exactly the same time. Riencourt-les-Bapaume was taken on August 30th, 1918, and the other Riencourt—reached, but not held, by the 56th and 57th Divisions on August 29th—fell to the XVII Corps on September 1st.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

HORSEMEN IN GRÉVILLERS

This village is situated just "behind" or west of Bapaume, and the four cavaliers here riding through the ruins appear to be in imminent danger from falling tiles. Occupied by our forces on March 13th, 1917, during the German retirement, Grévillers, as related beside the pictures of its church on page 559, passed again into German hands a year later, to be eventually recaptured on August 24th, 1918.

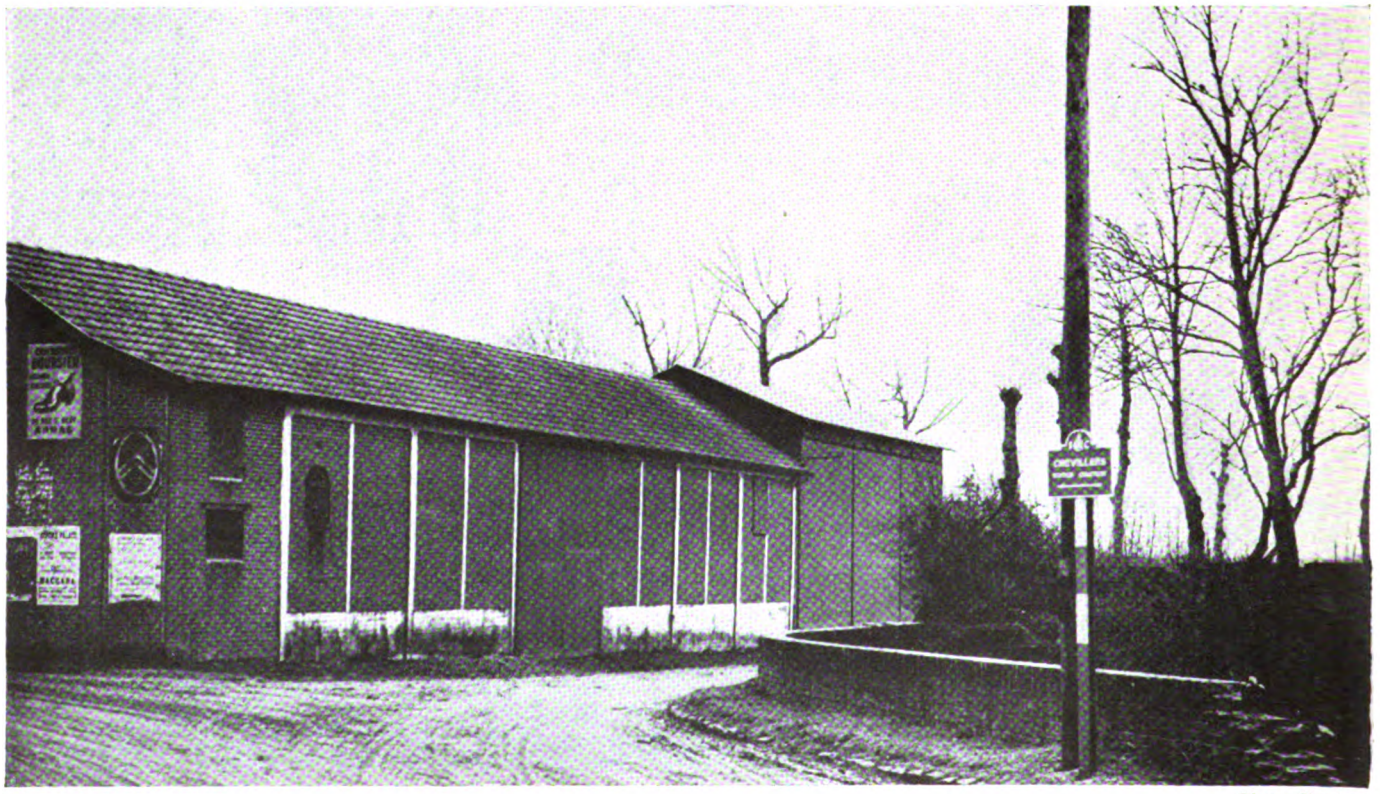

Photo : Keystone.

A CORNER OF GRÉVILLERS TO-DAY

A shoddy-looking corner, too, as zealously profaned with unnecessary advertisements as are a large proportion of our own villages. Note the English signboard on the right, which points the way to the British Cemetery. At the outset of the First Battle of the Somme, 1916, Grévillers lay well behind the German third line, which was then still in course of construction. This line ran through Irles, Pys, Le Sars, and Flers.

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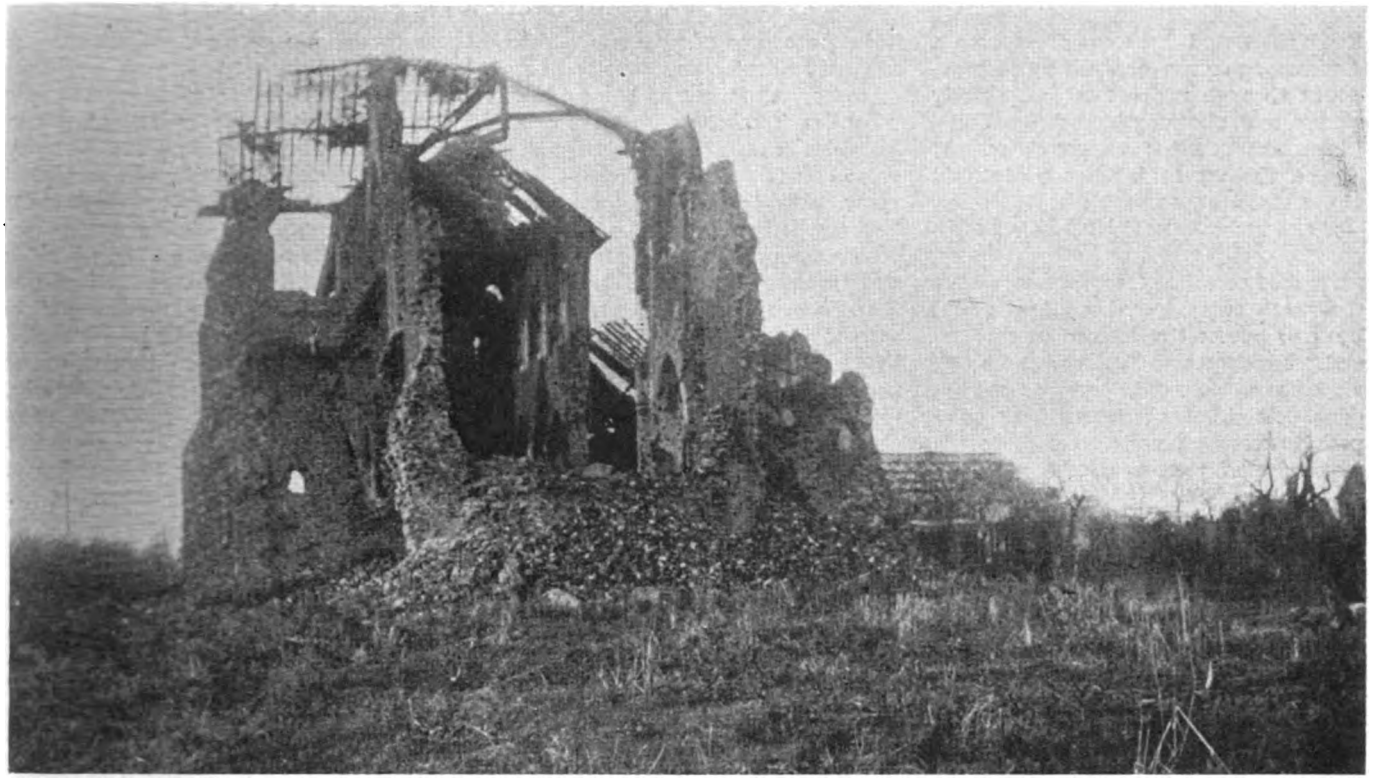

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AS SEEN FROM THE FRONT LINE

The ruins of the church of Fauquissart as seen from a front-line trench. This minute place—a tiny collection of some half-dozen cottages strung out along the road from Neuve-Chapelle to Fleurbaix—lies about half-way between La Bassée and Armentières. Not much can be said about it after 1915, except that it fell to the enemy on April 9th, 1918, and was recaptured on September 4th.

Photo: Keystone.

AS SEEN FROM THE PADDOCK

On March 13th, 1915, at the tail-end of the Battle of Neuve-Chapelle, the Duke of Westminster took two 3-pounder armoured cars to the front-line trenches at Fauquissart, and worked havoc, at 800 yards' range, against snipers and machine-gun posts in the adjacent village of Trivelet. Fauquissart Military Cemetery, between the hamlet and Laventie, to-day contains 105 graves, mainly of 2nd Royal Berks and 2nd Rifle Brigade casualties.

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Zulu ; whereupon the Turks dropped their rifles and held up their hands. Another squadron charged into the redoubt through which Cox had already ridden, and, shooting from their saddles, forced the garrison to surrender. At 4 p.m. the 1st L.H. Brigade captured No. 2 Redoubt, and with it Kadir Bey —the commander of the Turkish detachment.

At the same time Chaytor's men from the north swept over the village ; and by 4.30 p.m. all resistance was at an end. Ninety-seven Turks were buried, 1,282 were captured, together with 4 guns. As usual, there was keen competition between units to capture the maximum of prisoners, as a result of which Comte St. Quentin—the French military attaché—found himself, in spite of furious protests, in a regimental bag. The British casualties numbered 146.

No Fun for the Wounded

The horses were watered at Magdhaba, and back the party trekked, riding through the night for the third time in four nights. All were dog-tired. For the wounded swaying in their *cacolets* (litters) it was a night of hideous suffering.

In the course of 24 hours, a force of mounted riflemen and guns had covered 50 miles, had fought on horse or on foot 23 miles from their water-supply and 50 miles from rail-head, and had destroyed a well-entrenched enemy detachment. Magdhaba was, in fact, a brilliant little victory.

The troops were back at El Arish on the morning of the 24th—Christmas Eve. Some of their presents had arrived just before starting for Magdhaba, so many of the men had tied to their saddles such gifts as consisted of food, with the idea of supplementing their somewhat meagre rations.

As they advanced at a gallop in the early stages of the fight, most of the packages broke loose, and the battlefield was strewn with plum-puddings, packets of chocolate, and other dainties—to the pleasurable surprise, no doubt, of local Bedouin on the following morning. There remained, however, a goodly supply of Christmas comforts at El Arish, which were much appreciated by the troops after all their hardships.

On the 27th, it was decided to press the advance along the sea-coast ; and, as a preliminary measure, an attempt was to be made to capture a Turkish force located at El Magruntein, 1½ miles south of Rafah. It seemed almost inconceivable that the Turks would expose another detachment to capture after their experience at Magdhaba. But there it was, definitely marked down by aeroplanes and agents. It would certainly be on the *qui vive*, so very careful arrangements would be needed if surprise were to be effected.

It was decided to employ the same troops as had been used at Magdhaba, together with the 5th Mounted (Yeomanry) Brigade, and 4 armoured cars. To facilitate the quick elaboration of plans on arrival at the objective, the position was photographed with the utmost care.

The Game is Given Away

The advance began at 4 p.m. on January 8th. On reaching Sheikh Zowaid—a village about half-way to Rafah—every precaution was taken to prevent the inhabitants from communicating with the Turks. A field

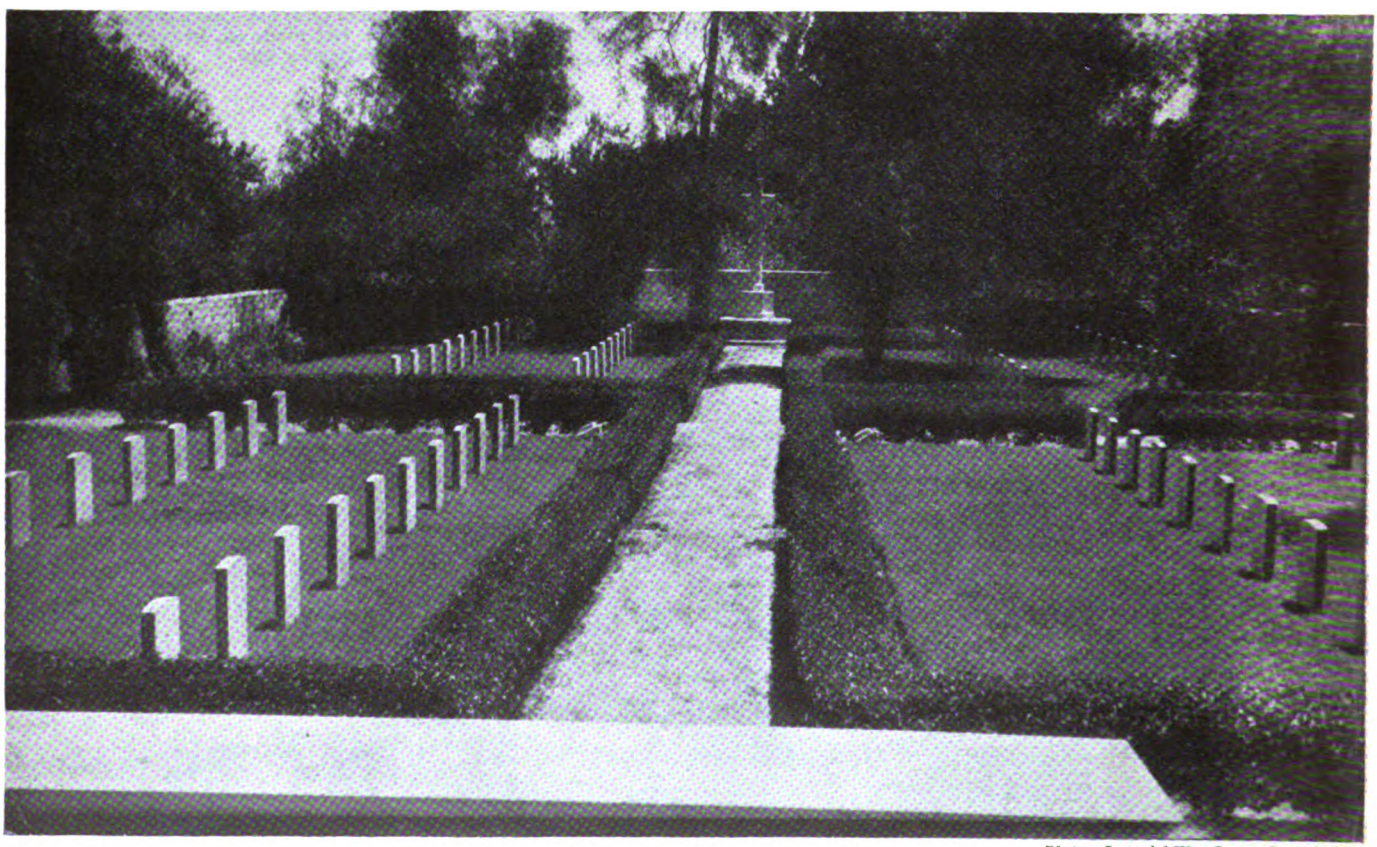

Photo : Imperial War Graves Commission.

MINIA CEMETERY, EGYPT

Minia, or Minieh, is a town on the west bank of the Nile, about 140 miles south of Cairo, and gives its name to an administrative district of Egypt. It did not figure actively in the War, but has since become of interest on acount of its British cemetery, of which this is an illustration. Altogether more than 24,330 United Kingdom and Empire dead are commemorated by Egyptian burial-grounds and memorials. The tasteful layout and fine upkeep of Minia Cemetery are once more a high tribute to the Imperial War Graves Commission.

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ambulance, however, managed to lose its way, and, marching with calm intrepidity far ahead of the advance guard, drew the fire of the Turkish outposts and set them upon the alert. All wheeled vehicles were left behind at the village, and at 1 a.m., on the 9th, the march was resumed.

A reconnaissance of the position disclosed that it consisted of a number of well-sited and well-constructed works, which had a perfect field of fire in every direction for about 2,000 yards. In fact, it looked an even worse proposition for attack by a mounted division than Magdhaba; and the enemy had been warned.

The plan again took the form of an encirclement. The N.Z.M.R. Brigade moved east and north, captured Rafah, and then turned south against the main ridge at point 255 and against the Reduit. In this movement it had left Africa for Asia. The 1st and 3rd L.H. Brigades attacked the eastern group of redoubts, the Cameliers the southern.

The latter, however, lost a good many of their camels from barracking them at 8,000 yards from the enemy's guns, and were consequently forced to return and withdraw them out of range. The 5th Mounted Brigade was held in reserve. As spectators, just outside the field of small-arm fire, were Bedouin, either idling, or with camel and donkey in unequal yoke, ploughing their land.

At 9.30 a.m., the guns, which included B Battery H.A.C., opened fire with half-an-hour's bombardment; and then the troops, who had closed to about 2,000 yards, went in. Progress was slow, owing to the openness of the smooth slope over which the advance had to be made, and to the heavy fire of the enemy. As soon as it was clear that all exits had been closed, reserves, both local and general, except for a single regiment, were sent forward.

Armoured Cars to the Fore

The Yeomanry attacked the western redoubts. "On our left," wrote an Australian, "the English and Scottish Yeomanry had dismounted and were advancing as confidently as if they were walking down a city street."[1] The other reserves reinforced the lines to the east and south. The armoured cars, boldly handled, bumped through some heavy fire and took up a position in a depression where they were just sheltered, and from which they could enfilade Turkish trenches on the western side.

By 2.30 p.m., however, the advance was practically at a standstill. Fresh efforts were demanded, and fresh concentrations of fire arranged for 3.30 p.m. Given time and ammunition, we were certain to win in the end; for our superior weight of metal must have eventually rendered the redoubts untenable. In the interval, however, news was received that 3 Turkish battalions had left Shellal—15 miles to the east—for Rafah when the action had opened, and that another band, some 500 strong, was moving south from Khan Yunis.

The situation was therefore clearly dangerous. The troops had been marching and fighting for 24 hours, and had made no serious progress in the attack. The last reserves had been thrown in. The units were scattered far and wide, in vulnerable formations; and ammunition, much of which had been left behind at Sheikh Zowaid, was running short. What possible excuse could a commander offer were he to allow his force to be caught and defeated in such conditions, when a previous warning had afforded him an opportunity to escape?

Chauvel discussed the situation with Chetwode, and the order was given to retire. But, as so often in war:

> "If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
> It may be in yon smoke concealed,
> Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
> And but for you possess the field."

New Zealanders Sweep On

The long pressure was beginning to tell. The troops, whose determination had not waned before the dogged resistance and fierce fire of the Turk, were already responding to the fresh

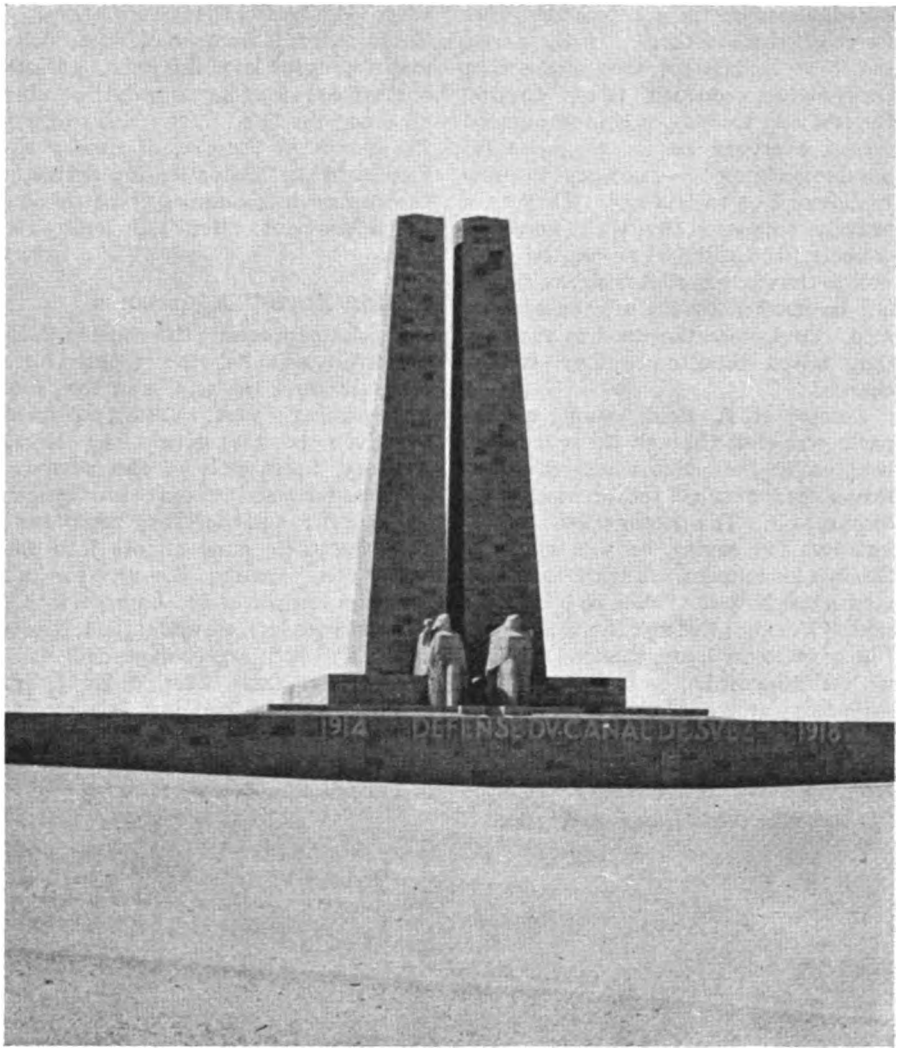

Photo: Central Press.

TO THE MEN WHO KEPT THE CANAL

Many who did not participate in them, and even some who did, are prone to regard the Eastern Front "side-shows" as of an importance almost negligible relative to that of the campaign in France and Flanders. This is certainly not true of the defence of the Suez Canal, than which there is no more vital link in all the lines of communication joining the British Dominions. This monument, at once dignified and admirably in harmony with its surroundings, commemorates those who gave their lives in the protection of the great waterway.

[1] *Australian Official History*, p. 241 *et seq.*

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call made upon them before the order for recall reached them. In the north, the New Zealanders, recognising that the contest was one with time, " covered the last 600 to 800 yards in two grand rushes, everyone having made up his mind to get home "[1]—and swept into the Reduit and on to Hill 255. They were bravely supported by their machine-gunners, who galloped across the open well to the front so that their fire should not be masked by the advancing riflemen. And, once the fire was masked, they seized rifles and joined in the charge.

Trooper R. A. Reid, leading a gun-pack, was shot through the spine, but held on to the point where the gun-teams had reached cover, and then dropped off. The doctor tried to comfort him by saying he was hit only through his muscles. But the wounded man knew better. " You're lying," he said, " I'm shot through the back ; but I hung on to my horse, though ! "[1] And with that he died.

Shortly afterwards, the Cameliers, who had crawled to assaulting distance, rose with a shout and carried most of the group of works to the south and south-west. As they reached the trenches, the Turks raised a number of white flags, and a moment later the panting assailants were shaking hands with the enemy all along the line. Many times during the campaign there were similar examples of the instinctive incapacity of the Anzacs to sustain their battle-fury for a moment after the fight was won.

[1] *Australian Official History*, p. 241 *et seq.*

" Bing Boys " Aggressive

Quick to appreciate the value of these successful assaults, the Light Horse swept in from the east, and the Yeomanry from the west. Credit, too, must be given to the guns. The Horse Artillery, in support of the advance, galloped forward into exposed positions in the open; and the " Bing Boys " kept thrusting their guns almost into the front line, earning thereby for all time the respect of the Cameliers. Of the junior leaders, on whom the fortunes of the day had largely depended, none won greater fame than Major J. H. Huddleston, who had just taken command of an Australian battalion after playing a principal part in the conquest of Darfur.

The battle was now over. Except for a few bodies which escaped through the ring, the Turkish force was destroyed. It lost 200 in killed, 1,635 in prisoners, and 4 guns. The British casualties amounted to 486, some of which were caused by the " overs " incidental to an encircling line.

During the later stages of the struggle, the British airmen, with bombs and machine guns, had been delaying and discouraging the hostile parties from Shellal and Khan Yunis. Nevertheless, before the fight was won, New Zealanders were already engaged, though distantly, with those detachments. Their close approach, and the fact that the ammunition was now practically exhausted, rendered an immediate retirement necessary. The prisoners were therefore hastily collected, and the force withdrawn to Sheikh Zowaid.

The field ambulance of the 3rd L.H. Brigade remained on the battlefield collecting the wounded, and the 8th A.L.H. Regiment, acting as escort, drove off some Turkish cavalry and marauding Bedouin during the night. In the morning it was found that the Turks had withdrawn. Limbered waggons were therefore sent to clear the battlefield.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

EL ARISH CEMETERY, 1918

A typical war-time cemetery amid the drifting sands of Sinai. El Arish was occupied by the British and Imperial Forces just before Christmas, 1916. It had been expected that the Turks would put up a stout fight at this point, but on the eve of the British advance they retired towards the Palestine frontier. At the close of 1916, El Arish, although the only settlement of any size in northern Sinai, was but a small place. According to our ideas it was little more than a village. When the Palestine campaign developed this picturesque oasis rapidly grew in size. It was an attractive spot situated within a revolver shot of the blue Mediterranean, and there was welcome shade to be found within the groves of date palms. Healthy, as desert places go, El Arish was selected as the most suitable situation for advanced field hospitals and here many thousands of wounded men received attention.

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Reproduced from the original painting by courtesy of the Ypres League.

"ROYAL ARTILLERY AT HELL FIRE CORNER"

Few individual points on the Western Front became more unpleasantly notorious than Hell Fire Corner, on the Menin Road. The "corner" is formed by the intersection of this highway with the Potijze—Zillebeke road, and also the Ypres—Roulers railway; but the above painting by H. Septimus Power is reproduced at this point in our work because it conveys, as few photographs could do, the type of "hell fire" which the artillery had to face at one time or another on nearly every part of the front.

Turks' Air Handicap

A German Taube had witnessed our start and reported it. Another German machine bombed our led horses. But the Turk was on the whole weak in aircraft during these operations, and we possessed a marked ascendancy in the air, from which we drew a considerable profit. Had the air-balance been in favour of the enemy, the victories at Magdhaba and Rafah would hardly have been possible; for the led horses of mounted troops offer a particularly vulnerable target.

There was a striking similarity in the actions at Magdhaba and Rafah. The Mounted Division marched and fought, for the most part by night, in the one instance for 50 miles in 24 hours, and in the other for 70 miles in 48 hours. In both cases there was a race with time, and the first definite success was obtained just after the commander had decided to withdraw.

In both cases, also, the margin between defeat and victory was small; for, though it is not difficult to surround entrenchments with mounted troops, the consequent extension of an Arm naturally weak in rifle fire deprives the attack of depth and body, and renders its control, especially in the event of misfortune, very difficult. It speaks volumes for the resolution and gallantry of the troops that, working under such serious handicaps, they should have won through.

It should be remembered that the Turks laboured under a grave disadvantage owing to their lack of mounted troops. They could neither cover important areas, nor carry out reconnaissance, without exposing infantry detachments to destruction. That, however, does not excuse Djemal. He was warned by Kress of the folly of his procedure, but persisted in it because, for political reasons, he did not want to evacuate Sinai entirely. His action cost him 3,000 first-class soldiers, and a good deal of prestige to boot, without fulfilling its purpose.

The two defeats made the Turks jumpy if within 30 miles of British troops. They withdrew their posts from the whole of Sinai, and even abandoned a strong position which they had been entrenching for some weeks at Shellal.

Good-bye to the 42nd Division

A long period of what is known as peace-warfare now ensued. On January 11th, 1917, Murray was informed that large-scale operations in Palestine would be deferred till the autumn, and that he was to make his preparations accordingly. In the meantime he was to despatch the 42nd Division to France to take part there in the spring offensive, to which the main effort of Britain was now being directed.

Entrenching, reconnaissance, training, and recreation now filled the short, bright winter days. By February 5th, the pipe-head had reached El Arish, and the railway was well ahead of that point. The question of supplying the great encampment, therefore, caused no anxiety, except on those rare occasions when storms were of such violence as to wreck both ships and railways.

Beyond the rail-head, provision was being made for wheel-transport to replace pack-animals; though for certain pur-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A LIST TO STARBOARD

Feuchy is a village on the south bank of the Scarpe 5 km. due east of Arras. On the afternoon of April 9th, 1917, the 15th (Scottish) Division carried Railway Triangle—formed by the junction of the Arras—Lens and main Arras—Douai lines just west of the village—and went on to capture Feuchy, making a breach in the German third line. This photograph of Fowler traction-engines near the village, with the Scarpe in the background, was taken during the same month.

poses the camel was to continue to play a part to the end of the campaign. Roads did not, indeed, exist in southern Palestine. Firm ground suitable for their construction could, however, be found, so that the future lay for the most part with horse and motor-transport.

Good relations were being established with the inhabitants—a task that can always safely be left to that best of ambassadors, the British soldier. In the villages, sports were being organised for the children—a sure road to the hearts of the mothers. At El Arish these *tamashas* were on a large scale—stands, and even seats, being provided.

At first the women came under protest. Heavily veiled, they sat with their backs to the arena. But when pillow-fighting on the greasy pole began, and when the son of the local sheikh was battling with the most villainous of the younger rapscallions, bodies turned round and veils were lifted. Long before the next (and succeeding) shows began, there was a fierce scramble for seats by mothers determined to see and applaud the exploits of their offspring. The veil on such occasions became a thing of the past.

Formation of the 74th Division

When the 42nd Division left, it was replaced by the 53rd Division, released from garrison duties in Egypt after the final defeat of the Senussi. The 54th Division, which was occupying part of the Canal defences, was concentrated in readiness to follow the 53rd, and a new division—the 74th—was being formed out of various dismounted yeomanry brigades, artillery and other divisional troops being added as they became available. Garrison-battalions, composed of men past marching age and younger men suffering from various disabilities, took over many of the duties in Egypt connected with internal security.

The mounted troops were reorganised into two divisions, each of four brigades: the Anzac Division (Chauvel), consisting of the 1st and 2nd L.H. Brigades, the N.Z.M.R. Brigade, and the 22nd (Yeomanry) Brigade; and the Imperial Mounted Division (Hodgson), composed of the 3rd and 4th (newly formed) L.H. Brigades, and 5th and 6th Mounted Brigades. The hospital services, which had not been functioning satisfactorily, were also reorganised, and many improvements effected therein.

We may now turn again to the Arab Campaign. On September 22nd, 1916, the Emir Abdullah (now the ruler of Trans-Jordania) captured Taif after a

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long siege. The prisoners taken there brought the total of captures from the outset up to 5,000, among whom were a considerable number of Arabs and Syrians, who joined Sherif Hussein. A large quantity of British rifles were shipped to the Hedjaz, and three fighting groups formed under the three brothers—8,000 with Ali opposite Medina, 4,000 under Abdullah east and north-east of that town, and 8,000 under Faisal operating from Yambo against the railway. It is with the last group that we are almost entirely concerned.

Ali and Abdulla continued the campaign on the Hedjaz till the end of the War, but they failed to capture Medina or to achieve any notable success. Faisal, on the other hand, swept away to the north and was the outside-right in the victorious Allied advance to and beyond Damascus.

In December, 1916, the Turks defeated the Arabs south-west of Medina. Faisal fell back on Yambo, and Ali on Rabegh. There was then a serious danger to Rabegh, because, having a good water supply, it would certainly be attacked if the Turks advanced on Mecca.

Enter Lawrence of Arabia

It was almost settled to send an infantry brigade there from Egypt; but, fortunately, fear of alienating Arab sympathies by quartering Christian troops so close to the holy city of Mecca proved a decisive bar, and the Arabs were left to run their own campaign with the help of British gold, British munitions, and British advisers.

In January, 1917, a British Military Mission was sent to assist the Sherif. Among its members was the now legendary figure of T. E. Lawrence—a young archæologist, possessed of a deep knowledge of the Arab language and character, who had formerly been employed in the Arab Bureau in Cairo, and was, from this point onwards, to exercise a decisive influence on the Arab campaign.

The first stroke in the new order provided a striking success. The Emir Abdullah drew the Medina force toward him by cutting the railway 70 miles to the north. Turkish attention being thus distracted, Faisal abandoned Yambo and marched 200 miles northwards to El Wejh. This dangerous movement was greatly helped, as were all movements as far as Aqaba, by British command of the sea, and by the ready assistance lent by the British sailors.

On January 23rd 500 Arabs landed from our ships and, aided by the fire of

Photo: Keystone.

BY THE BANKS OF THE SCARPE

The 37th Division inaugurated an attempt to widen and exploit the third-line breach made by the 15th at Feuchy, but was held up for a considerable while owing to uncut German wire. The trees in this photograph imply from their girth that they survived the numerous bombardments bestowed on Arras and its neighbourhood; but this is not necessarily so, for after the Armistice many trees were transplanted to the devastated regions from the back-areas.

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our naval guns, captured the town. The Arab soldiers in Turkish employ deserted, and the Turkish garrison, numbering some 200, was driven off, many of its members to be captured by Faisal's advance guard, which arrived on the 25th.

The effect of this bold undertaking was immediate. Faisal's prestige bounded up, and Arab sheikhs galore came in from the wilds to swear allegiance to him. He "swore new adherents solemnly on the Koran between his hands 'to wait while he waited, to march when he marched, to deal kindly with all who spoke Arabic and to put independence above life, family and goods.'" [1]

Faisal Successful

At El Wejh, Faisal threatened the Hedjaz railway. He had regained the initiative, and from then onwards the Turks renounced all attempts on Mecca, and thought only of preserving their communications. They quartered one strong detachment at Tebuk, 300 miles north of Medina, and another at Ma'an. Each station was given a blockhouse and a garrison.

These arrangements did not, however, suffice to protect the Turkish communications from the continuous raids which, under British guidance, were now being carried out by the Arabs.

On February 12th, Major Garland, with 50 Bedouin, struck the railway 120 miles north of Medina. He had been told by the Arabs that trains were only running by day. He therefore expected to have the whole of the night for his preparations. He dispatched one party to mine a bridge near a station, and himself laid a mine farther south.

In the middle of his work he heard a train arrive at the station and pass quickly on. It was within 200 yards of him before he had time to complete his preparations, and he was only 50 yards away when the explosion occurred and threw the engine down the embankment. At the same time the Arabs successfully fired the mine at the bridge, so that the train was left both engineless and cut off from the north.

Plans were now laid for the capture of Aqaba. Auda—the leading sheikh of that district, and a notable warrior—came to pay Faisal a visit. As he sat down to dinner, he suddenly shouted, "God forbid!" He then "flung from his tent and there came a sound of hammering outside!" He had just remembered that his false teeth were of Turkish make, and he was therefore pounding them to fragments. And he suffered the tortures of the toothless until Wingate was able to send him a dentist to fit Allied dentures.[1]

Colonel Newcombe, in command of the British Mission, planned at this time that Faisal should not only raid the railway, but should seize and hold it far north of Medina, in the hope of thereby cutting the Turks permanently off from their supplies and enforcing their surrender.

[1] T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

Lawrence's Scheme

Lawrence, however, did not believe that the Arab was of value either in a set attack or in a set defence, and thought he would be much better employed mainly in raiding, whereby he would force upon the Turk a costly defensive action along a great length of railway. He (Lawrence) preferred to keep the Turk at Medina, rather than oblige him either to surrender or fight his way north and join in the struggle in Palestine. He would have the line often cut, but would permit just enough traffic to give the Turk the necessaries of existence.

That was one solution of the problem, and quite a good one. It is part of the art of war to solve problems by the light of reason rather than by text-book. Instruments should be used at the place, and in the fashion, in which they can be most effectively applied; and, unquestionably, the raiding of a long and fragile line of communications was a task peculiarly appropriate to Bedouin mentality and activities. The plan, admirably conceived and finely executed, was justified by complete success.

The alternative, however, might and probably would have been equally successful. Picture the feelings of the Turkish commander at Medina, cut off from supplies and reinforcements. At all costs he must regain his communications. Should he take for the task his whole force, or only a part of it? In the former case he must abandon Medina, with all the prestige attaching to its occupation, and strike north with a cumbrous baggage train. Hard upon his tracks will follow Ali and Abdullah with Arab bands—always at their best in a pursuit. He reasons thus:

"Ahead lies an entrenched position manned by well-armed Arabs trained by the British Mission, helped by Egyptian guns and French machine guns and led by Ja'afar Pacha. The entrenchments will be sited where lack of water will prevent wide turning movements. The defenders' flanks will be protected by the Bedouin.

"A frontal attack is inevitable. From our experiences in Mesopotamia we know that such an attack verges on the impossible, and even if successful, is paralysing in its cost. Defeat, cut off from the base, spells ruin. On the other hand, if I despatch only part of my force from Medina, my prospects of victory are even smaller." It is an unhappy choice.

Conjectures

The defeat of the Turkish commander—Fakhreddin Pacha—would have given

Photo: Illustrations Bureau.

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

The War produced heroes by the hundred, perhaps by the thousand; but it is an odd fact that it brought to light only one man worthy of the title "genius"—and he, as he stresses so often in his masterly book, "was not really a soldier." There are few civilised countries where something is not known of T. E. Lawrence's life; yet perhaps the greatest tribute to his hold on the world's imagination is the long-maintained refusal of whole nations to believe the news of his untimely death.

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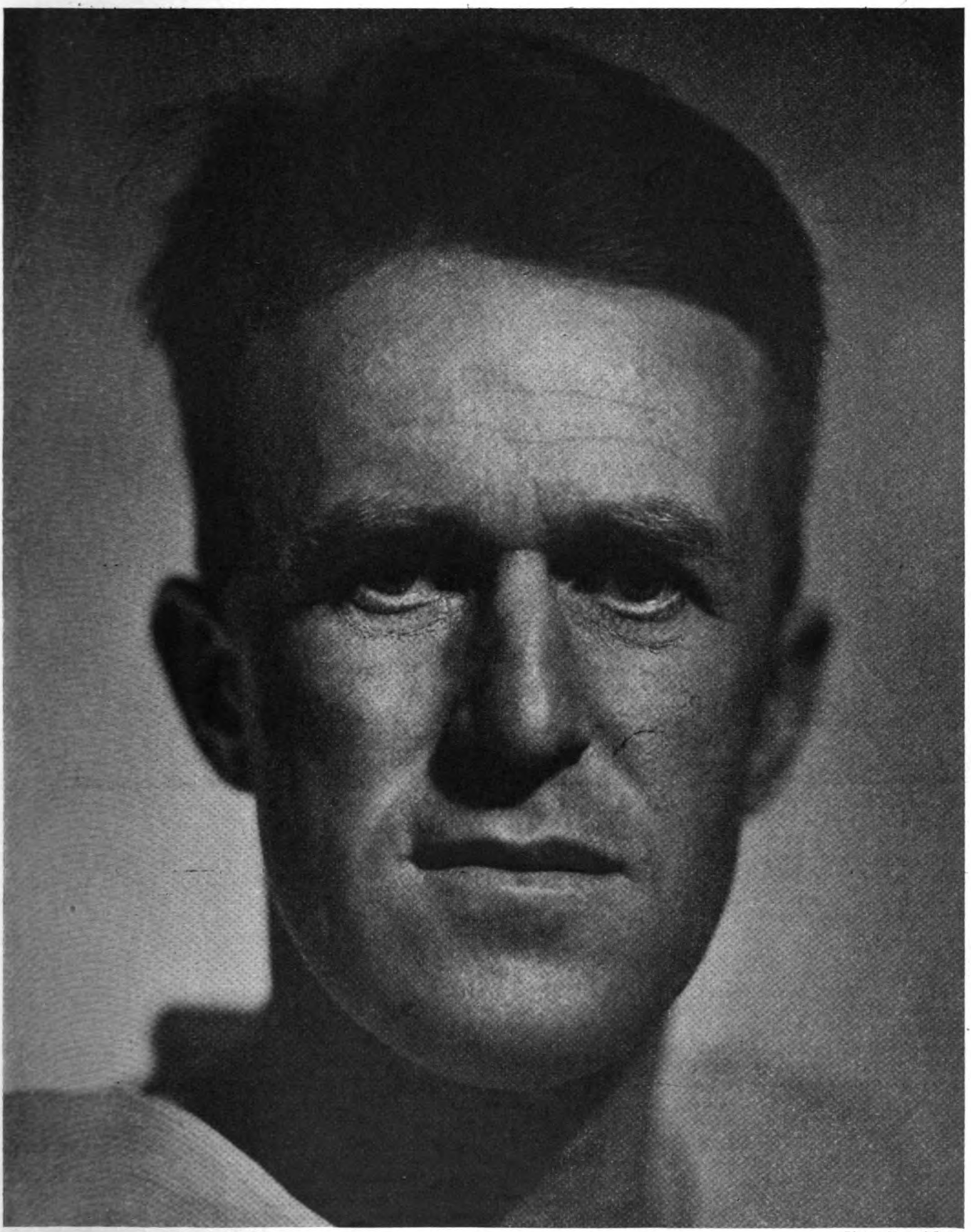

Photo : Howard Coster.

COLONEL THOMAS EDWARD LAWRENCE, 1888–1935

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Photo: Topical Press.

FEET

A soldier of the 52nd (Lowland) Division wearing over his boots the detachable wire soles designed to render easier the task of marching over the sands of Sinai. The device served its purpose reasonably well, but for some obscure reason was not popular. The breadth of the wire tended, like a snow-shoe, to prevent the feet from sinking; and the only disadvantage was a tendency to trip the wearer yet unaccustomed.

an early and tremendous fillip to the Arab movement. The Emir Faisal could have operated thereafter with effect at least equal to that of his actual performance. In fact, had the original plan been carried out, the campaign might well have been considerably shortened.

The principal doubt lay on the resisting capacity of the Arab in entrenchments.

Fighting in a good cause, well-armed and well-led, with all the conditions in his favour, would he sustain a frontal attack? That was the question.

This matter has been discussed at some length, partly because the decision reached was of considerable importance to the Palestine campaign, and partly because the success of the guerilla methods adopted by Lawrence have been taken in some quarters to imply that a new era has dawned in war, and that the procedure usefully adopted in the deserts of Arabia is of universal application.

Lawrence's proposals were not accepted at first. They received approval only after his brilliant capture of Aqaba—the description of which will be deferred to a later chapter.

Lawrence himself was not only a leader: he was an expert in every branch of his work. He believed utterly in personal efficiency; and, whether in archæology, languages, shooting, or mine-laying, he set himself but one standard—the highest. With all his brilliance, he held genius to be the art of taking pains.

A Methodical Wrecker

Therefore, as a train-wrecker he left nothing to chance. He would remove the top layer of ballast and place it in a bag. He would dig a cavity for his mine, and remove the earth far from the track, scattering it to the winds so that it should catch no eye. He would then insert the dynamite in the cavity, attach the wire and bury it for some 200 yards. Returning, he would replace the surface-layer of ballast and level off. Finally, he would walk away backwards, sweeping the ground as he went to cover his footsteps.

All preparations completed, he would calmly await the train. The guard might see a solitary Bedouin of the desert seated on the hill-side; but that was a common sight, and would attract no attention. The engine would reach the spot. The front wheels would pass over the mine. There would be a deafening explosion, a cloud of smoke, and a shower of steel.

No wonder Turkish soldiers, entraining at Damascus, scrambled for the back seats of the rear carriage!

Lawrence's skill as a train-wrecker was much admired by his Arab legions. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to suppose that some of the expert destroyers of British telegraph and railway lines during the 1920 Arab rebellion in Mesopotamia learned their trade some years earlier on the right flank of Allenby's offensive.

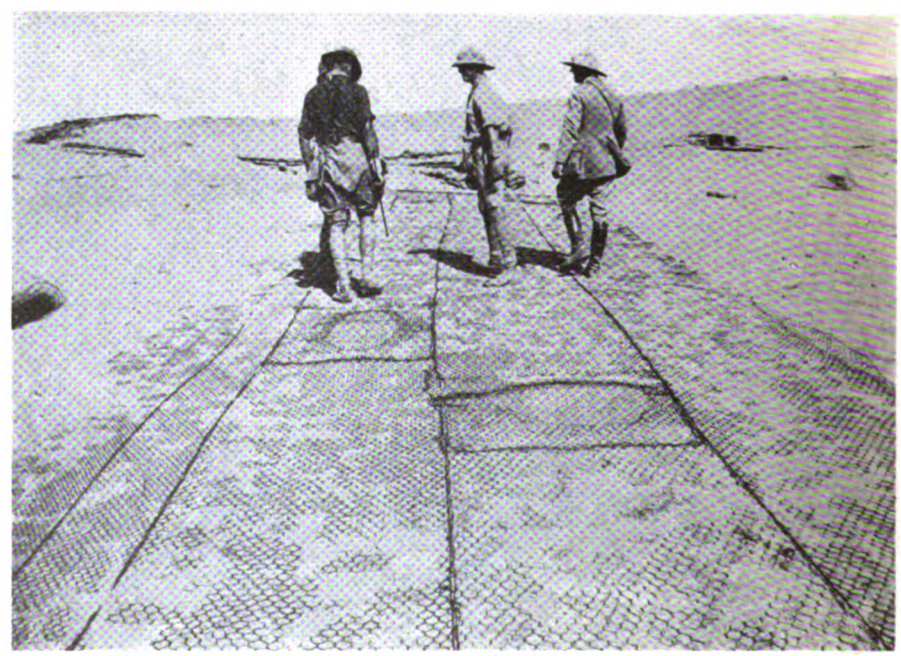

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A WIRE ROAD

Another device to facilitate marching across the desert was the rabbit-wire road, and this proved so complete a success that it served even to carry Ford cars as well as infantry. Cavalry, however, could not use it, owing to the horses' metal shoes, which cut the wire. Above is a photograph of four officers of the Surrey Yeomanry (74th Division) examining a stretch of wire road near Gaza, May, 1917.

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CHAPTER LII

MEMORIES X.—A TANK CORPS OFFICER LOOKS BACK

The Tanks were the outcome of one of the most brilliant "brain-waves" produced during the Great War. As in the case of many another sane, eminently practical suggestion, a long time elapsed before it was carried into practice. Conceived as early as October, 1914, by Colonel Swinton, R.E., now Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton, the Tank idea and its possibilities were at once appreciated by Mr. Winston Churchill, who, in spite of a good deal of opposition from the sceptical, supported it with every resource at his command. In the following chapter a member of the Tank Corps looks back and tells the story of those days in France when, to the consternation of the enemy, this potent new weapon rumbled into action for the first time.

My first contact with a Tank occasioned the first of a series of teetotal resolutions which have pursued me futilely through life.

Early in September, 1916, I arrived at Elveden in Suffolk, seconded to the Heavy Branch Machine Gun Corps—the "Hush-hush Corps," as I gathered we called ourselves. An air of mystery and omniscience pervaded this prescribed area. To my childish question, "What is a 'heavy machine gun' like?" I got the glittering and cryptic reply, "My God! You wait and see."

Apparition in the Gloaming

On my second evening in camp, feeling rather homesick for my old Highland battalion (and even for Grantham), I went for a run in the gloaming through the apparently deserted woods. Suddenly round the bend in a lane I heard a grinding and a grunting, and a few seconds later I was confronted by the awful apparition of a Mark I Tank with its weird wheeled tail. I drew up, petrified, wondering whether this was another manifestation of the concussion which had caused me to be invalided home from France. Finally I made an instinctive resolve never again to touch hot rum, and cautiously approached the monster. Out of the open sponson jumped one of my brother officers, and for many fascinating minutes I explored the greatest invention of the War.

Not that that exploration—nor any subsequent study of the Tank's mechanism—ever really enlightened my unmechanical mind. For example, a few days after this introduction I placed an ungloved hand on the exhaust, and tried to hide my agony with the mild remark, "Is that the pipe the sparks go down?" And a few months later I leaned against the sparking plugs as three men cranked the 105-h.p. Daimler engine. Fortunately the sponson opposite me was removed and the ground was soft outside, or this fatuous story might never have been told.

I give these personal reminiscences as an excuse for avoiding any reference whatsoever to the technical development of the Tank. It was a source of perpetual irritation to the engineering experts among my friends that the revolving steel slot which subsequently superseded the peepholes was originally

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TANKS IMBIBING PETROL

Four Mark I Tanks filling up with petrol on that eventful September 15th, 1916, which saw this new weapon flung into action. The first design of Tank was that known as "Little Willie," which, although in external appearance much more similar to the machines of to-day than the familiar Mark I's which succeeded it, proved a failure at its tests. The Mark I type was consequently the first to be put on the battlefield. The scene of the above photograph is Chimpanzee Valley.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NEAR FOUCAUCOURT

A scene on the famous Amiens—St. Quentin road at the time of the German retirement to the Hindenburg Line. Foucaucourt, the village nearest to this stretch of the highway, lies just half-way between Lamotte-en-Santerre and Brie, and is among the places which were left high and dry by the retirement, only to be reoccupied for a few months in the summer of 1918. The photograph shows men of the Notts and Derby Regiment on the march.

a vague idea of my own. It was still more exasperating to everyone that my section of Tanks was invariably best at mechanical tests.

My instructions to my crews were laconic: "A little learning is a dangerous thing. I don't know the first thing about motors, and I am not going to try to learn; but for God's sake don't let me down." Nor did they, ever. The extraordinary *esprit de corps* in this brand-new branch of the Service was one of its most fascinating characteristics. Moreover, my section possessed a sleight-of-hand expert, so that at inspections each of my Tanks was always in possession of its full complement of magneto "spares"!

On Their Honour

At Elveden our area was surrounded by sentries, and no unauthorised person was allowed to enter its hallowed precincts. However, "leave" was generously dispensed to both officers and men —for we worked hard. We were merely put on our honour to keep absolutely mum about our activities. We knew that one of our companies was already in France.

But on September 15th, 1916, the secret was revealed to the world in the famous line of the despatch, "A Tank is advancing through Flers with the British Army cheering behind it." Nevertheless, we were not amused. There was not an officer or man in the Corps but believed that this new weapon should have been launched in large numbers in an attack on a grand scale, and felt that the whole enterprise had been frittered away in a small local experiment.

I still think that but for this premature revelation of the secret, Tank would never have fought Tank, as happened at Villers-Bretonneux in 1918 (to some extent to the discomfiture of the British machines); nor would the Germans have advanced in anti-Tank measures as they did during the critical battles of 1917.

Nevertheless, we had six months' start, and we never lost that advantage. The secret had been admirably kept. Each Tank was marked with Russian lettering. It was given out that they were snow-ploughs for the Russian Army, or mobile water-tanks for the British forces in Palestine; and that, of course, was the origin of the name.

Wool, Bovington, and Lulworth Cove were subsequently chosen for the headquarters of the Corps, and it was for camps near those delightful Dorset villages that we left Elveden late in November of 1916. There we found a hive of activity, and recruits in plenty. Apparently infantry battalion commanders had been circularised and asked to recommend their "most intelligent men, particularly those with some mechanical knowledge."

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Photo: Keystone.

ON THE GREAT HIGHWAY

The long, almost curveless Amiens—St. Quentin road was one of the main east-and-west arteries on the Western Front, and the use made of it was not limited to times of retreat and advance. Indeed, it might well be said that the only occasions on which sections of this highway enjoyed a "rest" were when parts of it lay in No Man's Land—and then there were trench-raids afoot. Notice, above, how the stumps of the old trees have been left in the earth.

Needless to say, such a request produced the inevitable result, and we found that the new drafts consisted not infrequently of agricultural labourers and men with interesting crime sheets. But a year later I would not have exchanged one of these men for the most highly-skilled mechanic in the country.

Lieut.-Colonel Hankey

The Elveden Sections became the nucleus of new battalions. We became "G," under the command of Lieut.-Col. Hankey, already almost a legendary figure on account of his famous order to the 2nd Worcesters at the First Battle of Ypres.

Just before we moved to Dorset a few machines were sent out East, to Palestine; and some of these eventually assisted in the advance on Gaza.

Gradually stories of the first Tank action on the Somme drifted back to us, and stimulated our zeal in training and preparation. Some of the men who were in that fight were drafted to us, and the lyrical ones told us how, on reaching their final objective, they found the sides of their machines dripping with the molten lead of German bullets. The more truthful confessed how they had lost direction, and how the tail-wheels broke off or the hydraulic jacks jammed.

As the battalions passed all their courses and tests, which ranged from gunnery and mechanism to the care and feeding of carrier-pigeons, they were despatched to France. "G" Battalion embarked at Southampton on May 24th, 1917, for Le Havre. There we entrained for St. Martin l'Eglise and neighbouring villages in the vicinity of the Tank Corps headquarters at Bermicourt and the central workshops at Erin. At St. Martin l'Eglise we could hear the faint rumble of guns, but it was the constant fugue of nightingales that first charmed us and then disturbed our slumbers. When our practice-Tanks were issued, we continued our training and manœuvred them over the old battle-trenches at Wailly.

The rumours of a great battle-to-be grew more and more convincing. Some time in July there was to be the greatest advance of the War, and the jumping-off ground was to be the Ypres Salient. The attacks at Bullecourt and the successful mining of the Messines Ridge were, we were told, only the essential preliminaries for a really serious effort farther north. And so it proved. On July 11th we drew our new Mark IV Tanks at Erin and entrained for Oosthoek Wood—between Poperinghe and Ypres, on either side of the *chemin militaire*.

Touch and Go

We took a devious route northward. Perhaps the hollowest feeling that the War ever produced in the pit of my stomach was when our train of 16 Tank-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSSING A TRENCH

A machine photographed while on its way to take part in the great tank-battle of Cambrai, November, 1917. Trenches—unless, like those of the Hindenburg Line, they were 12 feet wide—presented no difficulty to the original Tank, whose caterpillar-tracks enabled it to crawl down one side and up the other with perfect ease; and the same is true of most other battlefield obstacles.

trucks—crews perched on the camouflaged machines—passed over a deep ravine. Suddenly there was a succession of ominous cracks, and a strut of the bridge hurtled into the river beneath. Each Tank weighed 30 tons—an unwonted load for the slender structure. However, having held for those few moments long as years, I trust that the bridge is still in good order.

We spread out and camouflaged ourselves in Oosthoek Wood, but soon found ourselves subjected to constant bombing and shelling, particularly at night; and it was found necessary to withdraw the personnel to La Lovie Wood, two miles north-west of Poperinghe. Later we discovered the reason for the enemy's attentions to Oosthoek Wood. In one of their periodic raids on our trenches they had captured a certain garrulous sergeant. Until it be quite certain that he gave away information of the whereabouts of our concentration, it is not fair to name him and brand him for ever. We, in turn, had captured German official papers detailing his alleged confession.

Meanwhile we studied the German shelling of the Ypres Canal causeways to the north—over which we had to cross—and reconnoitred the sinister grey land beyond in relation to our allotted objectives. It all seemed so simple. The masses of guns and vast ammunition-dumps which we saw on our way through Brielen up to the canal suggested overwhelming power. We little thought then that those same shells were to frustrate our advance, and that our men were later on to drown in the yawning holes made by their explosions.

A Fatal Postponement

The great attack of the Fifth Army was due to begin at dawn on July 28th, but a sudden excursion by the Germans in the north delayed matters. Had it not been for that fatal postponement of 72 hours, it is possible that we might after all have "rolled down to Roulers" early in August, as we were so pitifully confident of doing. No military histories appear to give full significance to that delay. The 28th, 29th, and 30th of July, 1917, were comparatively dry days in the Salient; but a quarter-of-a-million men of the British Army will ever remember what the rain was like on the night of July 31st, on August 1st, and after.

On the night of July 29th we crossed Marengo Causeway, luckily without casualties. Ten minutes after the last Tank had got over, the earthworks were plastered with German shells. Once more we had successfully traded on the enemy's routine punctuality.

Though limping from a sprained ankle, I persuaded my colonel to let me tape the route from Marengo to Frascati Farm. I wanted to play some part in the battle that was to end the Great War! My slow hobbling about on

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ENTERING GRÉVILLERS

Grévillers changed hands for the last time when the New Zealand Division captured it on August 24th, 1918. This photograph shows battle traffic in the vicinity of the village on the following day. Various captured guns (4·2's) are visible, and in front of the advancing infantry are two Mark V Tanks of the 10th Battalion.

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Photo: Elliston & Cavell, Ltd.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ERNEST SWINTON

To-day in every army in the world the Tank is regarded as an essential part of its fighting equipment. Thus, in a little over twenty years, a new and formidable weapon has been thought out, produced, and brought to a high standard of efficiency. The idea of a sort of moving fort which would flatten out enemy wire and render the task of attacking infantry easier and less dangerous was first put forward by Colonel Swinton of the Royal Engineers in October, 1914. Nearly two years elapsed before the first Tanks went into action. The name "tank" was also the idea of Colonel Swinton, and this name, intended at first to deceive the enemy, has for long been adopted not only in our own army but in other armies as well. Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton, who raised and commanded the original Tanks Corps (called, for secrecy, the Heavy Section, Machine Gun Corps), was in 1935 appointed a Colonel Commandant of the Royal Tank Corps, a tribute to one who was literally the originator of this modern horse of Troy.

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crutches on previous reconnaissances had made me study the ground carefully, so that all went well, except for a squeaky barrage of gas shells. I stumbled over a prone figure on the way, and discovered it was Colonel Hankey, suffering from a "whiff." I gave him one of my little ammonia capsules "to be squeezed and sniffed," and was only just in time to prevent his swallowing it.

We lay doggo against the hedge below the ruins of Frascati Farm all through the dull grey day of July 30th. The only news we got was that we were to expect an enemy counter-barrage of mustard gas; and some Cassandra among us told how a gas expert from G.H.Q., having found two duds among the first of these shells, had proudly returned to G.H.Q. with one under either arm, only to find himself in hospital the following day—and for the next month—with agonisingly blistered armpits.

Four G's

Soon after two o'clock, on the morning of the 31st, with splutterings and rumblings the Tanks moved forward—ours in the direction of Hill Top Farm and into the graceful circle of the Verey lights. Sadly I said good-bye to the crews of my four machines, the two males of which I had christened Grouse and Grumble, the females Giggle and Gossip. These appropriate names—of which I was so proud—were never to be used again, for none of the four originals emerged from the Salient, though fortunately three of the crews did.

Some time later I was to see a piece of iron jutting out of the morass by the Steenbeek. Further inspection made it only too evident that Grumble's day was done. His nose alone showed—like that of some great whale. His clutch had slipped for the last time!

I returned to my reserve section at Frascati and waited for 3.50 a.m., zero hour.

Few of us will forget that moment when the heaviest barrage of the War burst like the crack of doom. Five seconds before the appointed minute, a fierce crackle of machine guns started on our right, suddenly to be obliterated by an indescribable din: a crash, roar, and bark so all-pervading and continuous that the sounds of the countless shells—each one like that of the rending of calico—was no more than a gentle soughing remote from the general tumult.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BETWEEN ARRAS AND TILLOY

Tilloy-les-Mofflaines lies 3 km. east-south-east of Arras, on the main road between there and Cambrai. Also running past the village, upon its western side, is the minor road from Arras to Guémappe. It was at Tilloy that the northern end of the Hindenburg Line entered the old German front-line system; and at the beginning of the Battle of Arras—April 9th, 1917—Observation Ridge, just north of the village, threatened to hold up our advance. The ridge was taken, however, by the 12th (Eastern Counties) Division.

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Photo: Keystone.

BETWEEN TILLOY AND ARRAS

The illustration facing this shows a typical road—and trench—scene at the time of the Arras battle: this later picture, a typical view of the melancholy highway nowadays. In addition to the points mentioned opposite, a circumstance which rendered Tilloy important in April, 1917, was the existence, just south of it, of the large D-shaped trench system known as "The Harp." Here almost a whole battalion of the German *162nd Regiment* was captured during our attack.

We were just in front of our field guns, and we watched the myriad bursts of our shells throbbing and twinkling, savage yellow, in the level crescent of the Salient. We watched the steady, starry-white lights soar above the spluttering cauldron in slow-growing parabolas, then turn to crimson-and-green cascades that separated out, spread, sank, and died away—uncanny symbols of human terror.

So was half the horizon illumined, over 20 miles of German trenches. There was no interruption to that deafening roar, except the quick convulsive crunch of the German projectiles which burst nearby.

What the Dawn Revealed

Then gradually the pallor of dawn began to silhouette the skeleton trees, the pounded rubble, and the faint ridges, and to reveal the ant-like activity of hurrying black shapes scurrying over the waste, or dark columns moving with measured tread. Our field batteries were now pushing forward to advanced positions, and the noise became more distant and spasmodic.

As the pandemonium receded, we imagined the battle to be at least in Houthulst Forest beyond the Steenbeek, in Kitchener's Wood, and far down the Menin Road. But the counter-barrage had blocked the general advance badly. Slowly the quiet procession of the wounded came back. White bandages stood out starkly against the smoke and grey-brown background of the battlefield; ashen faces blended in hue with the rotting bark of the shattered trees, and listless limbs swung idly in harsh contrast with the dishevelled immobility of inanimate objects.

In the stiff, murky sky, brown, bulbous clouds massed like jinn behind the German lines, and all the enemy land, tortured by a myriad shells—each hole still smouldering with acrid warmth—was soon to become a sea of sucking mud. Instead of Zeebrugge or Brussels in August, the objective was to become Passchendaele in November.

Five of our eight Tanks working with the 51st Division reached their objectives, as did 10 of the 15 operating with the 39th Division. The rest were ditched or hit. One extricated itself from a bad position, and on its way back to the rallying-point got on to the road near St. Julien, which was swept by machine guns and encumbered with the dead and dying. To leave that road would mean the loss of the Tank, and its commander did his dreadful duty. But he arrived at Hill Top Farm—just behind our original front line—a raving lunatic. He was not normal again for many years.

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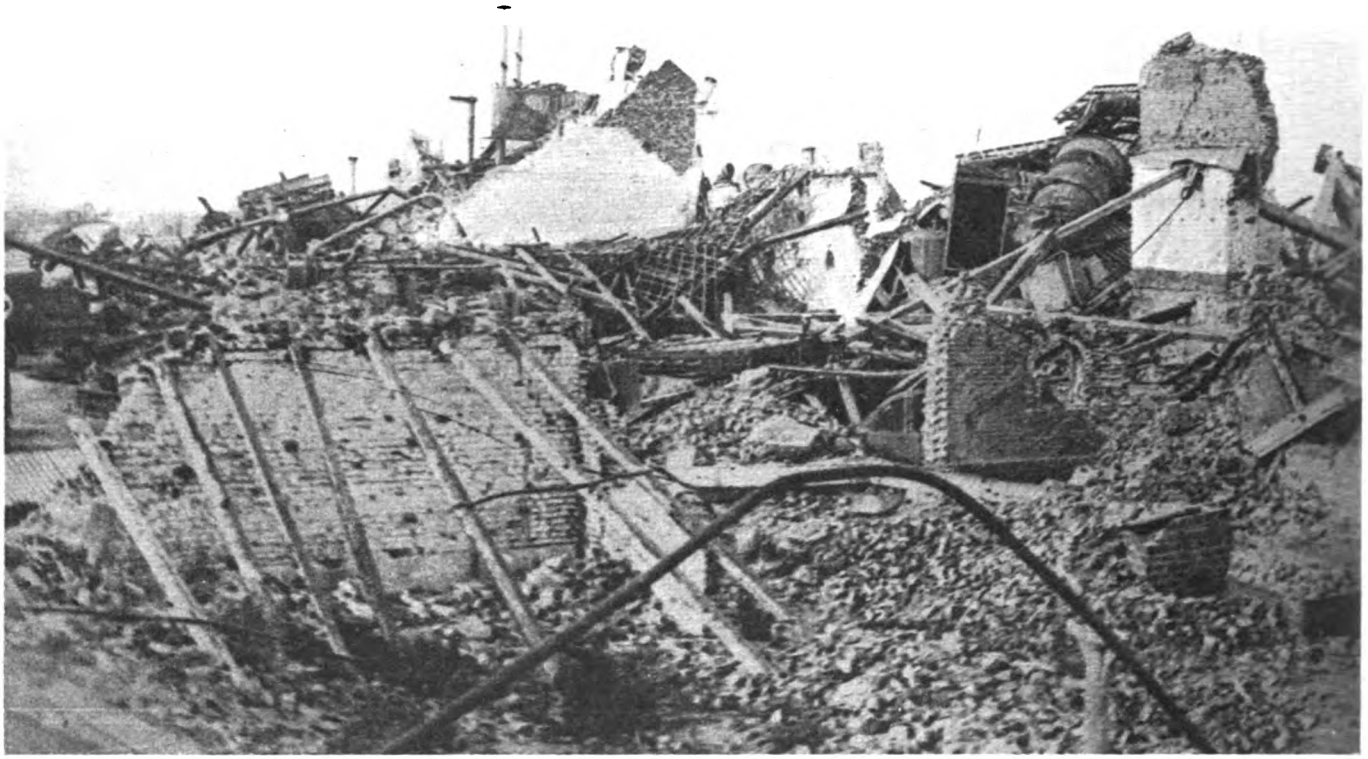

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NO LOAFING HERE

This photograph shows what the Great War did for a sugar-refinery at Boiry-Ste. Rictrude: very unfortunate, but the employees just had to lump it. The village stands on the north bank of the River Cojeul, 10 km. south of Arras; and immediately opposite, across the stream, is Boiry-St. Martin. Prior to the German retirement, Boiry-Ste. Rictrude lay just within the German lines, but the Battle of Arras brought it many furlongs within ours. It is situated astride the Arras—Amiens road.

A Grandiose Scheme

With the exception of a successful attack, on August 19th, on the enemy strong-points near St. Julien—Mont d'Hibou, the Cockcroft, and Hillock Farm—by a composite company of "G" Battalion, we took no further part in the Passchendaele offensive, though we prepared to play our part in several projected advances.

The most grandiose of these was planned, I think, for October 5th. Had it ever been launched, it is doubtful if the Tank Corps would have survived. The scheme was that the machines which remained—about 100 in number—of all the battalions, were to move in line down the road from St. Julien to Poelcapelle, then advance on to Westroosebeek and over the ridge to Roulers. They dared not, of course, leave the causeway, or they would have been ditched in the quagmire on either side.

Fortunately, two or three days before this cavalcade was to start, the Germans counter-attacked and took Poelcapelle distillery. The way had to be cleared for our triumphal march, so four Tanks were sent forward that night to assist the infantry in the recapture of the distillery. Needless to say that before they had advanced 1,000 yards from St. Julien, they were so much scrap-iron, for the German gunners raked that road regularly. These derelict machines, of course, blocked the supplies, and we of the Tank Corps were not popular.

But the argument that if four Tanks had been struck within 1,000 yards, at least some of the 100 would be hit in a distance of five miles, prevailed, and the project was abandoned.

Suddenly we were warned to entrain for Wailly, and the rumour grew that we were at last to be given the opportunity we longed for—a surprise attack on firm ground. After a fortnight at Wailly, manœuvring with infantry divisions, we entrained for Bertincourt, just behind Havrincourt Wood. We camouflaged ourselves safely in the wood without mishap, and on November 18th and 19th carried out our reconnaissances of the quiet front line. We were to work with the 62nd Division, on the left of the line from the Canal du Nord to Havrincourt village, our ultimate objective being the Bapaume—Cambrai road, five miles behind the German front line and just west of Bourlon Wood. The other Tank battalions were on our right.

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400 Tanks Advance

In all, just short of 400 Tanks were involved, and one of that number—the Hilda of "H" Battalion—had the moral effect of another 100, for in it went the G.O.C. Tank Corps, now Sir Hugh Elles.

On the night of November 18th two or three of us went out into the wide stretch of No Man's Land in front of Havrincourt. Our immediate job was to listen for the movements of the Tanks as we lay beside the German wire, in order to ascertain how much the enemy would hear the next night, when our machines deployed along their taped routes to the "jumping-off" position. We could not hear the faintest rumble of machinery, but we nearly gave our own position away by our almost uncontrollable laughter.

Instead of the rumble of engines, what we heard was the most superb flow of foul language. Apparently the steel bodies of the Tanks gave a bell-like resonance to the human voice, and faintly across the intervening 2,000 yards came: "Lock your diff., you —— —— fool!" "Mind that —— tree," etc. What the enemy made of it all I never knew, but on the following night soon after midnight they put over a heavy barrage. Most of it fell between our front line and the assembled Tanks 500 yards behind. However, it ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and only an occasional shell or bomb, or desultory rifle fire, disturbed the silence as we waited for zero hour at 6.20 a.m. on the 20th.

Actually we cranked up and slowly moved off towards the prepared crossing-places in our support and front-line trenches ten minutes before zero, for we were to be close up to the German wire when the unregistered barrage broke. A faint glow showed in the east as we stealthily crossed our lines, and the adjacent Tanks were just visible by the time we were in No Man's Land, with the infantry following in groups behind us. As we neared the enemy wire, there was a sinister whistling overhead, accompanied by the thudding of our concealed guns; and the dim line of the German trenches was stabbed with livid flashes amongst billowing clouds of smoke and dust, while just above it red blobs flashed suddenly and unceasingly—our shrapnel bursting with magnificent precision.

Flattening Out the Wire

Occasionally there was a harsh, metallic clang on the side of the Tank as bursts of fire from rifle and machine gun struck us. With these hits came a faintly acrid odour, but no "splash" came

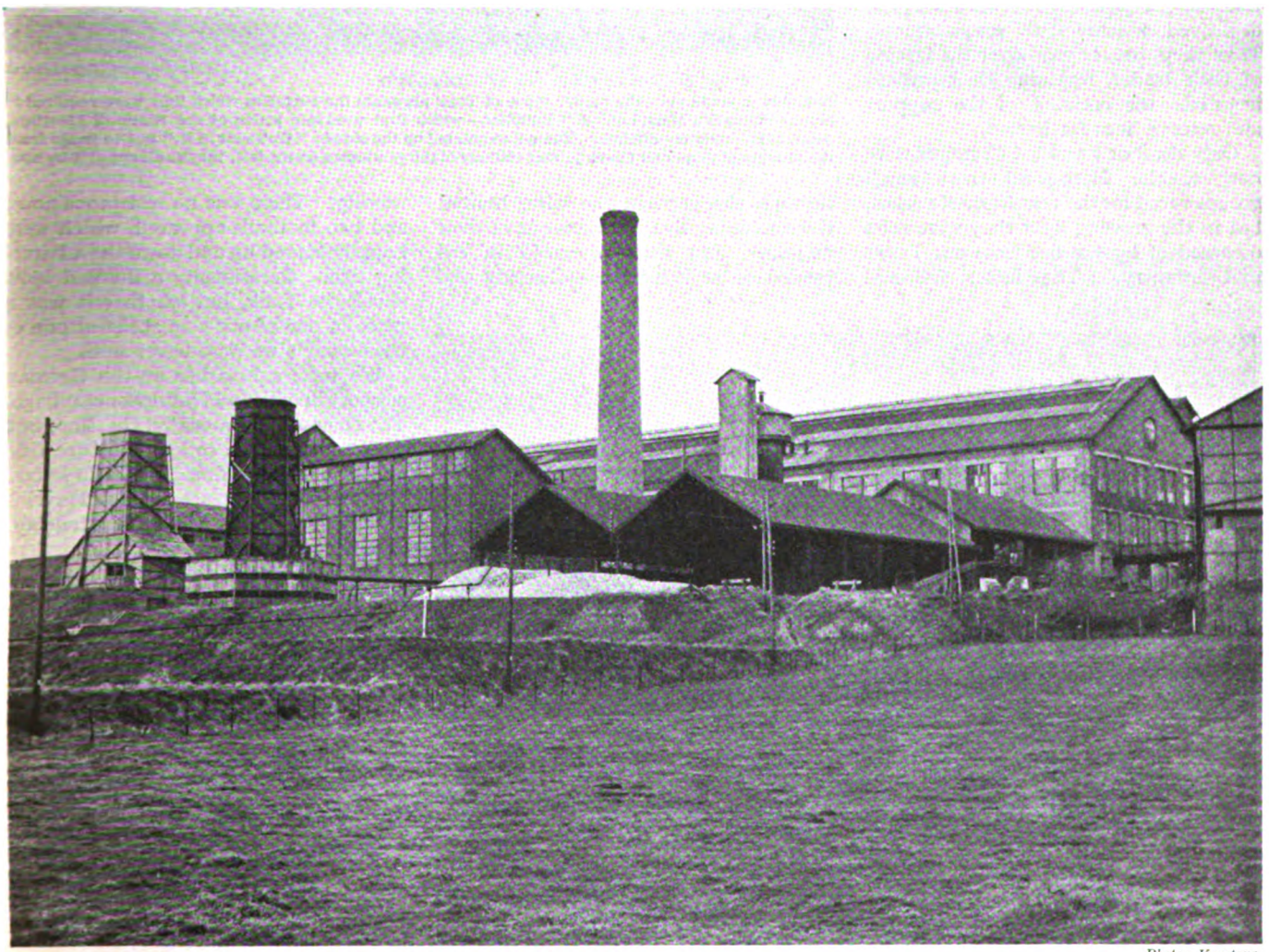

Photo: Keystone.

THE HEIGHT OF REFINEMENT

We may explain here that no fewer than four Boirys lie within 14 km. of Arras, and that each is notable for a different episode. Boiry-Ste. Rictrude, whose new sugar-refinery is here shown, and its neighbour Boiry-St. Martin, did not figure in the news after falling into our hands in April, 1917. The Boiry recaptured by the British on August 23rd, 1918, was Boiry-Becquerelle, 5 km. further north-east; and the Canadians on August 28th took Boiry-Notre Dame, near Monchy-le-Preux.

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through, and gradually, as we crunched and flattened the elaborate barbed-wire entanglements (of an average depth of 20 yards), the clamour on our bullet-proof plate practically ceased. The barrage had obliterated the enemy front-line defences.

The Tanks worked in threes. One nosed up, sought a crossing of the deep, wide trench, and then released a huge fascine (8 ft. long and 5 ft. in diameter—made of sleepers and tightly-bound brushwood). The machine dipped down, and as its tracks got a purchase on the fascine its nose slowly tilted up. With hardly any exceptions, all the Tanks succeeded in mounting the high parados and reaching the level ground beyond, now pitted with smoking shell-craters.

Meanwhile, the other two Tanks of a group of three moved up and down along the parapet, shelling any point that might possibly harbour an undestroyed machine-gun emplacement. Then they, too, crossed over the fascine of their leader, retaining their own to negotiate the crossing of the support and reserve lines farther on.

Only dead or wounded Germans were now visible. Here and there small groups raced for the rear in short rushes, but in the growing light they were soon disposed of by the fire from our Tanks and infantry. The latter followed through the gaps in the wire, hunted the remaining live Germans out of their dug-outs, and then advanced in extended order behind us—cheering and waving. There was no resistance now; and two footballs appeared, which were happily kicked up and down the advancing line. Occasionally a muffled blow shook the Tank, but whether it was a piece of one of our own shells or one of the enemy's we were never sure.

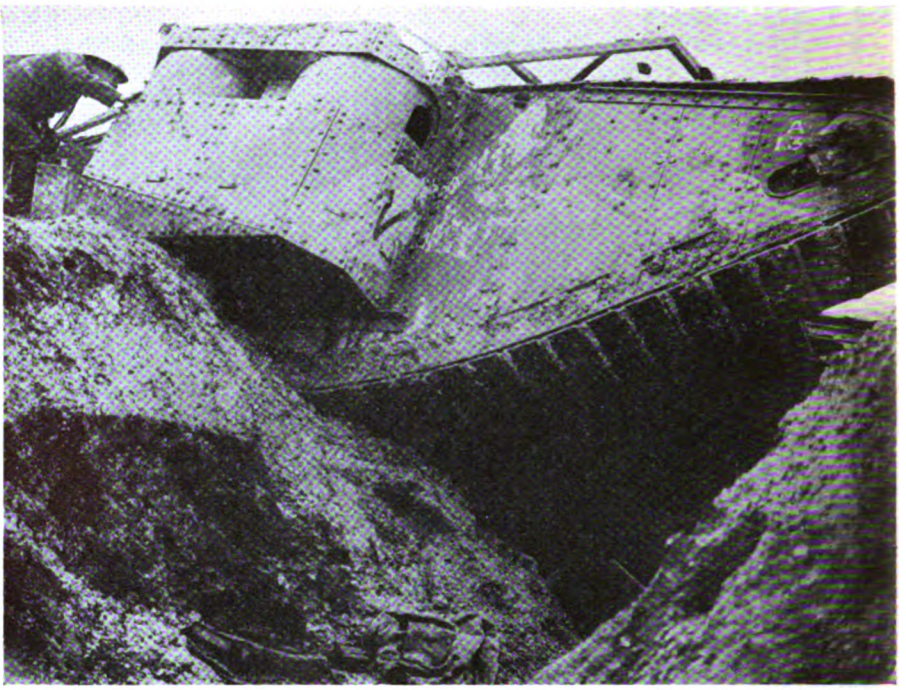

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DITCHED

Not always could even the earlier types of Tank negotiate the obstacles which they were required to cross. Here is a Mark I of "A" Battalion—which first went into action at the Battle of Messines, June, 1917—securely ditched. The name painted on the side is "We're all in it," but to judge from the absence of guns and the enquiring attitude of the gentleman on the left, they're all out of it by now.

We took a breather at the German support line behind Havrincourt village. The enemy had evacuated this line, but we were subjected to long-distance rifle and machine-gun fire. We little knew, then, that the advance through Havrincourt village had been effectively held up, and that one of our Tank commanders (Lieut. McElroy) was, single-handed, preventing the capture of his partially burnt-out machine.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CAPTURED

The Kaiser inspecting a captured British Tank at Bruges, December, 1917. By that time, of course, this weapon was no longer a novelty, as many as 700 Mark IV Tanks having been delivered in France only some two months previously. This machine was probably taken in the Battle of Cambrai, the first real opportunity given to the Tanks during the War.

One Man Captures Hundreds

Taking a breath of fresh air from the rear manhole, he rushed forward to the front, alternately using a fire extinguisher and a machine gun, or, when the enemy swarmed toward his Tank, his revolver. He saved the machine and the lives of half his crew, who were sheltering in a shell-hole alongside. Eventually the Germans in the village—some hundreds—surrendered to him when they realised that they were isolated, and that our advance was already miles behind them.

At about 3 o'clock we reached our final objective, the German divisional

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ARRAS
Then and Now

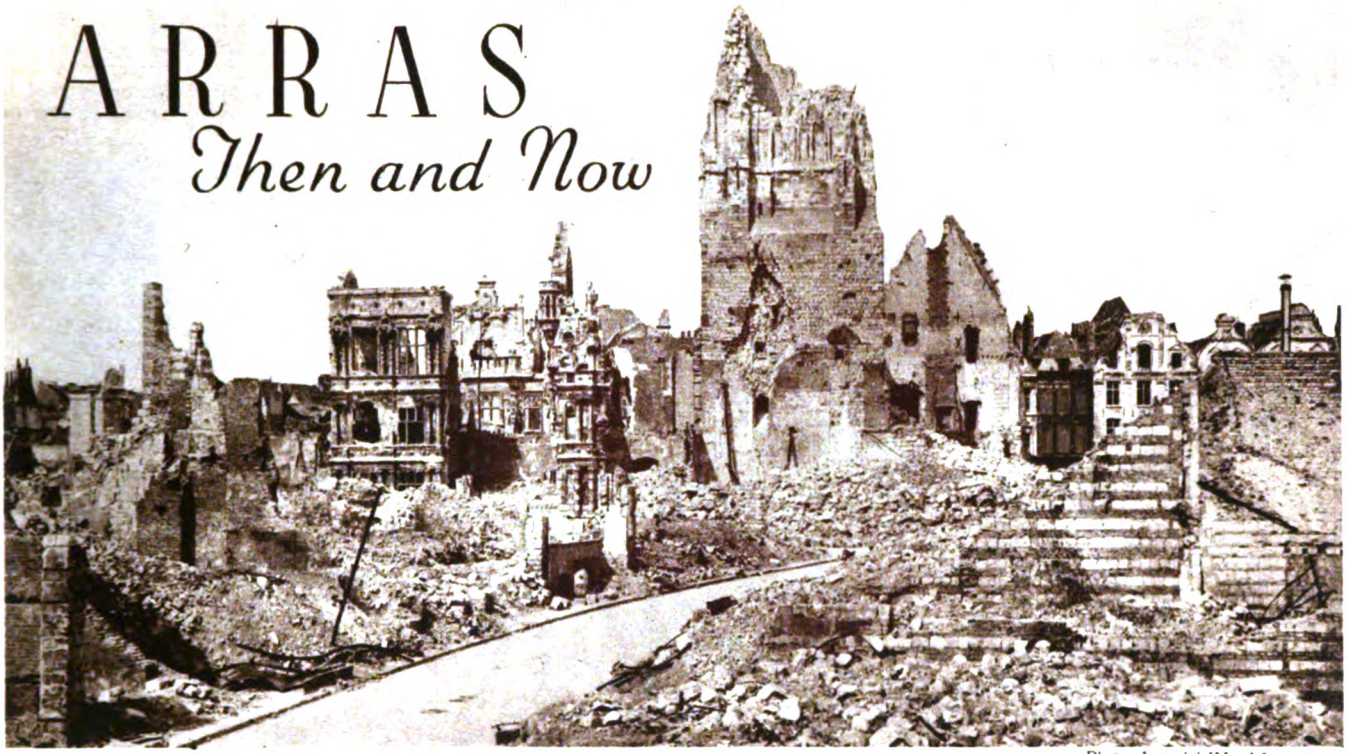

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE WRECKAGE OF ARRAS

This photograph shows the remnants of the once splendid Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall) as they appeared in May, 1917. The Hall was burnt down on October 6th, 1914, while the town lay still in French occupation. Our Allies' cavalry had entered on September 18th, and October 6th was the first day of enemy shelling. Something of the extraordinarily fine architecture of the 16th-century building is apparent even in this view; notice, for example, the stone-mullioned windows toward the left.

Photo: A. J. Insall

A GLIMPSE OF THE NEW TOWN HALL

The new Hôtel de Ville was opened only in 1932; and this glimpse of its graceful tower as seen from the rue Héronval, on the south-western side, shows the result of the elaborate and courageous restoration which took so long to complete. It is in the part of Arras visible here that during the War days the famous underground passages which were used for concentrating troops prior to the battle in April, 1917, had their entrance. This subterranean honeycomb also proved invaluable for accommodating stores.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

OH, LISTEN TO THE BAND!

A photograph taken on April 30, 1917, in one of the three great squares—the Grand' Place, the Petite Place, and the Place du Théâtre—which constitute the chief of Arras's wide open spaces. A British military band (*left*) is doing its best to regale a heterogeneous collection of Tommies, while in characteristic French fashion a railway engine disports itself in the roadway nearby.

IN THE

Three "big guns" of the "brass hat" fashionable street. It is, indeed, a str Baudimont, the rue St. Aubert, the rue ending up at the railway station. This town's share of bombardment ha

A RESID

A section of the rue Baudimont in whic this thoroughfare, under its various alia merging near the station into the usual co a certain number of manufactures, Arras partment. Until the War,

Photo: Keystone

AFTER THE MARKET

A modern picture of the same square looking thoroughly untidy after a hectic day's marketing. The date of the war-time view marks the close of our series of minor attacks delivered in the Monchy-le-Preux district to assist the French in their Aisne and Champagne offensive. In the course of the fighting our positions at Gavrelle were heavily counter-attacked no less than seven times, the 63rd Division on each occasion repulsing the enemy with heavy losses.

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UDIMONT

what had once been part of Arras's most any names, becoming successively the rue le, and the rue Gambetta—the last-named taken in August, 1918, by which time the y been meted out some while since.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

L STREET

e houses predominate. The greater part of sists of the better-class shops of the town, of cafés and brasseries. Besides carrying on ortant as the capital of the Pas-de-Calais de- was rich in historic buildings.

Photo: Keystone

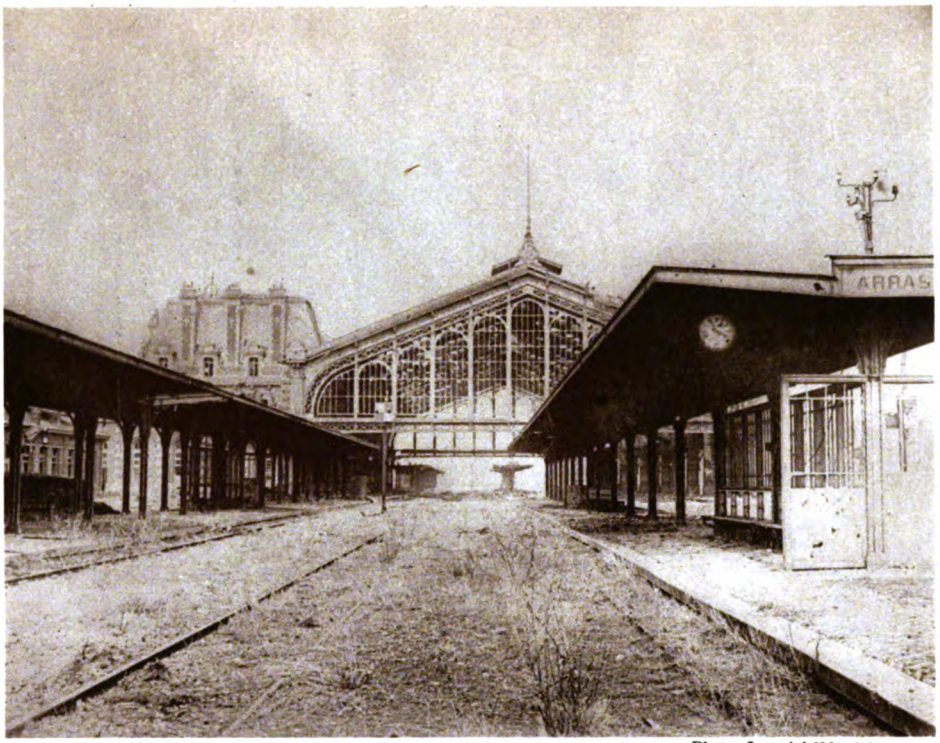

Photo: Imperial War Museum

LETTING THE GRASS GROW

The comparatively unscathed condition of the railway-station is a reflection of the somewhat static military history of Arras. Blangy—an eastern suburb of which more anon—saw fighting, but the town itself suffered only from shelling. It is therefore curious that Arras should have given its name to no less than five battles, although only one of them is famous. The above view is dated April, 1917.

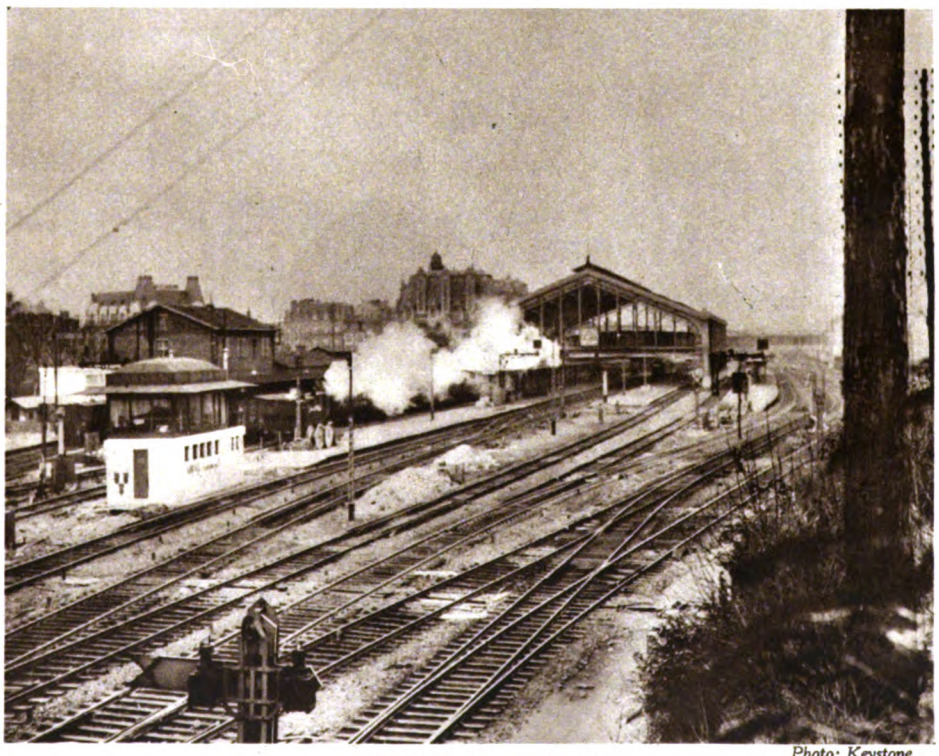

Photo: Keystone

A HIVE OF ACTIVITY

The new station is less imposing than the pre-war one, but somewhat cleaner in design. In the background (*right*) is a concrete passenger-bridge leading across the lines from the centre part of the town to the south-eastern suburb, where there are situated blocks of flats and many small houses occupied by artesans. The square outside the station is nowadays adorned very ornately with a War memorial, flanked by extensive lawns and flower-beds.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

RUINS OF BLANGY

This is the eastern suburb of Arras through which our line ran at the opening of the Battle of Arras, April 9th, 1917. Actually the rival front lines ran across the middle distance of these views, approximately where, in the modern version below, the tall chimney rises. The pictures were taken looking toward Arras, and the mill-race (a channel of the Scarpe) in the foreground flowed just behind the enemy's position. The above photograph was taken after our advance on April 9th.

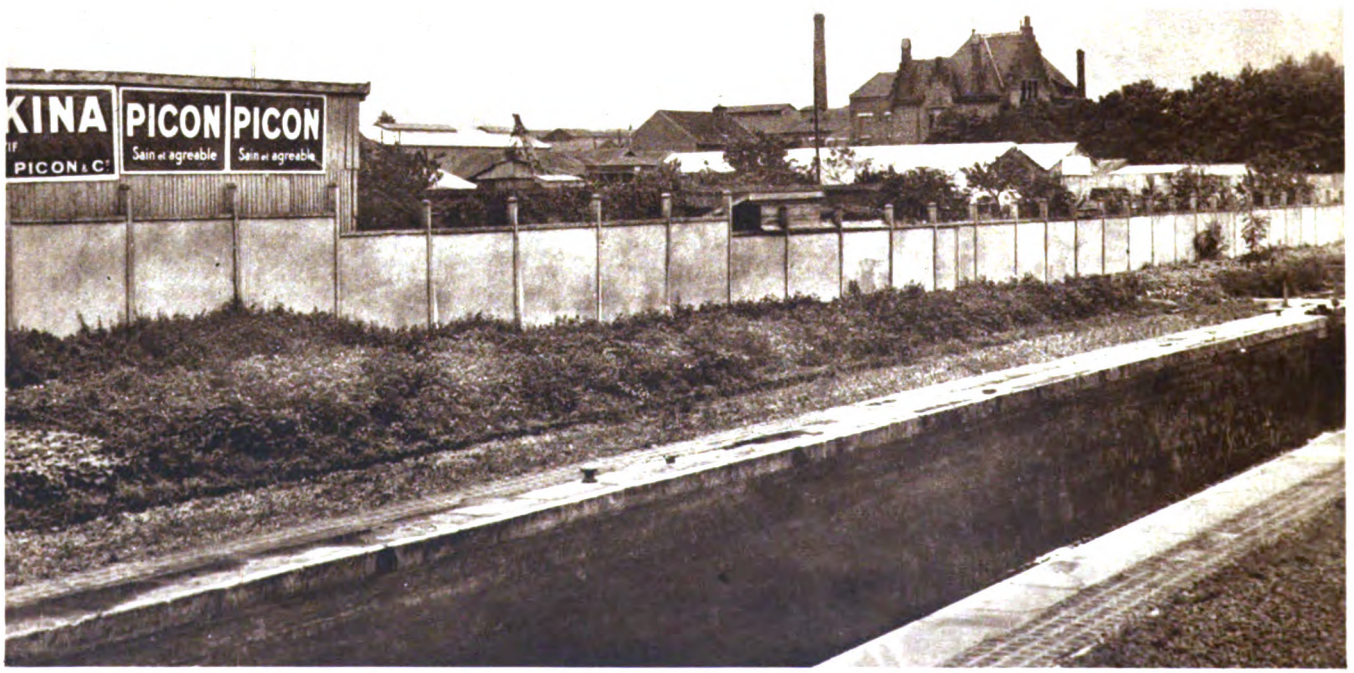

Photo: A. J. Insall

STILL NO BEAUTY-SPOT

The sister-suburb of St. Laurent-Blangy lies just off to the right, or north, of these views. In and about it are four British War cemeteries, of which by far the largest is that named Bailleul Road East. Here lie 1,225 United Kingdom, 43 Australian, 12 Canadian, 6 South African, and 1 Newfoundland fallen. The three other cemeteries—Bailleul Road West, Mindel Trench, and Hervin Farm—contain respectively 97 United Kingdom and 1 South African, 190 United Kingdom and 2 South African, and 51 United Kingdom graves.

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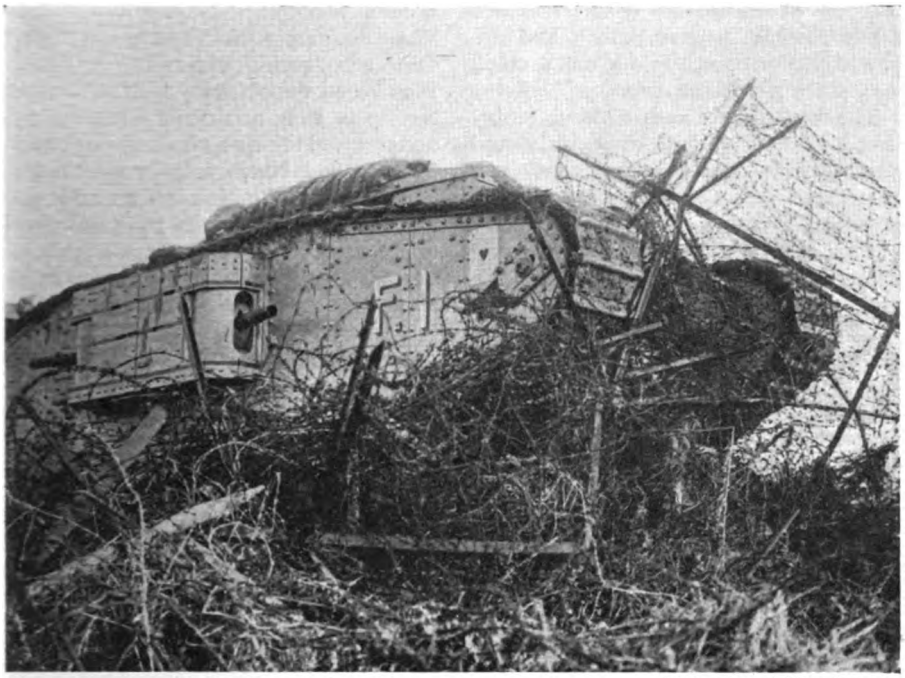

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FLATTENING THE WIRE

Dating from October 21st, 1917, this illustration shows a Tank being put to one of its most valuable uses—the flattening-out of barbed wire. In front of the Hindenburg Line the wire entanglements were in some places no less than 25 yards deep, and would have been utterly impenetrable had this means not existed of forcing a way through them. The infantry advanced in file along the Tank-made lanes.

supply dug-outs. Three of my own six Tanks and five more from neighbouring sections arrived, but without the section commanders. Being, therefore, in charge, I distributed the machines in sheltered dips in the ground and awaited further orders. Groups of infantry now joined us, and soon a very youthful staff-officer arrived, all smiles and congratulations. He sought me out and at once outlined a new scheme. "The rise beyond must be taken," he said. "It's swarming with Germans; they will consolidate the position to-night and prevent our advance on Bourlon Wood, and that's the key to Cambrai."

All this was very interesting, but absolutely news to me. "Some officious junior staff-captain," I thought to myself, and replied with some asperity that I had my instructions, and that these were to await orders from brigade, and also the arrival of the petrol-supply Tanks; for by now no machine had petrol for more than a mile. I therefore did not propose to sacrifice mine at the whim of an unknown officer.

His eye twinkled, and he said, "Sorry, old lad, I should have said who I am. I'm General Bradford, commanding the 187th Brigade, and I'll give you half my brigade for this job. It really is vital." My whole demeanour changed; the stars on my shoulder seemed to be dropping off. But we had a good laugh, and I at once drained off the petrol of four of the machines into the other four, and we were soon ready to set out. Meanwhile the supply Tanks arrived, and the other four Tanks were consequently available.

V.C. at 24

The general took my arm as I left for the leading tank, and said affectionately, "I ought to warn you that you probably won't come back from this show. The ridge is strongly held; it's a vital position. But you can feel that this attack is worth any sacrifice. If we capture the ridge we may get Cambrai in the next day or two. Good luck and God bless you."

His words sent a cold feeling down my back; and I was singularly uncommunicative when I got into my Tank. (It is sad to relate that Brigadier-General Bradford—a V.C. and M.C. at 24—was killed in Bourlon Wood a few days later. For all his grave responsibilities, he had nevertheless found time to write a letter to my C.O., saying how I had assisted his brigade, etc.)

Anyhow, we rumbled forward, and the clatter of bullets increased in volume. A "splash" cut my forehead and enmeshed itself in my chain-mail visor. Two of the gunners got flesh-wounds, but gallantly carried on till they fainted. Then, to our amazement, the smack of bullets ceased, and we saw masses of Germans coming out of their dug-outs and trenches waving white handkerchiefs or holding up their hands. The

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FOR CROSSING GULFS

The trenches of the Hindenburg Line were so broad and deep that a Tank, once it had dropped in, would not have been able to climb up the parados. This difficulty was overcome at Cambrai by carrying a 2-ton bundle of brushwood, known as a fascine, on the nose of each machine, to be let down into the trench as a bridge. Here we see the more professional "cribs" which by 1918 had supplanted the fascines.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TANK AND *FLAMMENWERFER*
It was but natural that the advent of the Tank should cause the enemy to search desperately for counter-measures. One measure adopted was the flame-thrower, and here we see a little knot of Germans opposing a Tank with this famous weapon.

infantry rushed forward and rounded them up, while we incredulously pushed on over the Bapaume—Cambrai road. More of the enemy scurried out, arms upheld, to join the main body of prisoners.

It all seemed too good to be true. We saw no sign of more Germans over the ridge. We got out, lit cigarettes, and in the fading daylight could just see the outlines of Cambrai. I then ordered the Tanks to return to what had been our final objective, and, taking one of their commanders with me, hurried on foot back to the infantry and their haul of prisoners. Suddenly a fully armed German leapt up out of the long grass, holding a bleeding wrist.

A Malevolent Prisoner

Our revolvers were in our holsters, so the only thing to do was to walk straight up to him, give him a cigarette, and bandage his wrist. He kept saying malevolently, "*Blessé*: Tank" and spitting. However, he came along with us like a lamb, and was greeted with howls of derision by his fellow-prisoners, who were now being gleefully searched for souvenirs by our infantry. I suspect he had bolted for safety long before the main body surrendered. That night, in the deep, comfortable dug-outs which had belonged to the German divisional supply, we found wire bunks, blankets, and tins of *delikatessen* from Unter den Linden. Our surprise attack had apparently been complete, for burnt steak was still warm in the ovens.

The next day we assisted the infantry to round up machine-gun nests and strong-points between Graincourt and Bourlon Wood. Again the approach of a Tank caused flight or surrender, but our infantry were without reinforcements, and only just managed to hold the ground we had captured. Two days later we penetrated Bourlon Wood; but by now enemy reinforcements were hurrying to the scene. Our line was still thinly held, and the chance of exploiting the original success and the hope of sweeping on to Cambrai was over. But we had shown a sceptical High Command of what we were capable.

We rallied at Havrincourt Wood. On November 29th we were inspected, and told that we were to entrain the next day for rest and refitting behind the lines. "A rest you have splendidly earned," the general said, and as he spoke these words one of our captive observation-balloons burst into flames and distracted our attention. "*Absit omen*," murmured the superstitious.

Not a Pleasant Occupation

Next morning there was stir and confusion everywhere. "The enemy has broken through. Move towards Fins Wood and engage the Germans at sight," were our laconic orders. We got to Fins Wood that bitterly cold night, and lay up in it in a state of absolute uncertainty. However, the German break-through had been partially checked at Gonnelieu and Gouzeaucourt, and it was to those unhealthy places that we moved up by sections, on successive nights, to tow back our guns, which were now in No Man's Land, or just behind the hastily-constructed line of defence. It was not a pleasant occupation, for enemy machine guns were trained on the derelict artillery, and our approach was soon known.

But by Christmas we were back at Méaulte and Bécordel, on the outskirts of the Somme battlefields just in front of Albert. Here, after a useful month in which many of us got our long-deferred home-leave, we were reorganised.

In the middle of February we moved up to the Lens section to prepare for the anticipated German onslaught. The Tanks were parked in the woods of the Lorette ridge, and we billeted in huts in the villages below. We practised numerous attacking manœuvres with battalions of the Canadian Corps; but with a far more sinister purpose we chose advanced positions in craters and ruins, from Souchez northward. To these

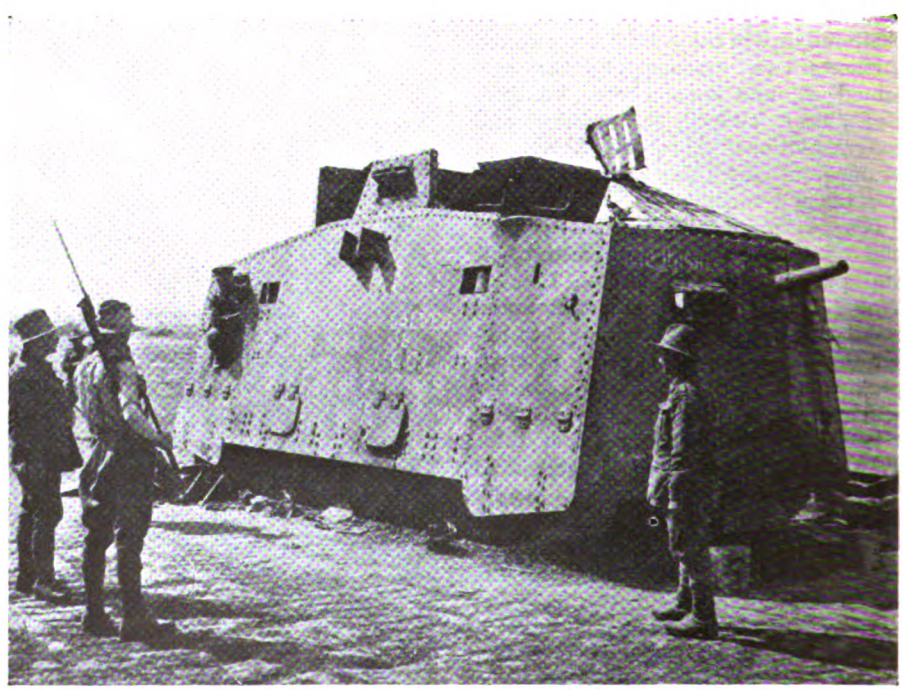

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GERMANY'S REPLY
As inevitable as the search for anti-Tank devices was that the enemy should themselves begin to build Tanks as soon as the capture of one or two British machines had afforded them sufficient data. This queer-looking object, half tank, half armoured caterpillar-car, is a very early design of German Tank which fell into our hands at Monument Wood on July 14th, 1917—four months before our display at Cambrai.

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death-traps we were to hurry if the storm broke on this sector. The plan was known as the "savage rabbit stunt." We were to let the advancing enemy sweep past us, and then to emerge from our lairs to harry them in flank and rear until we were blotted out!

But the big attack on March 21st was well south of our sector, and the later attack on April 9th north of us. We were immediately formed into Lewis-gun sections, and despatched in lorries south or north—wherever gaps in the line occurred. It was an improvident move, risking skilled mechanics in this way, but the general situation was rather desperate. By the middle of April we lay up behind Béthune, with our Tanks ready for defence against a further development of the northern attack.

As this menace passed, we were switched off to La Bassée and Annequin again, as a defensive reserve. Here our whereabouts became known, and we had too many night-bombardments with gas shells for our comfort. At the end of May we were withdrawn to Enguingatte. Later we handed in our Mark IV Tanks to Erin workshops, and then went to the sands of Merlinont for a general brushing up preparatory to taking over the new Mark V Tanks.

News of the Last Advance

In this halcyon spot we heard the news of the ebbing-away of the fierce German drive for Amiens, and of Foch's startling counter-attack on July 18th. Suddenly came the news of the Allies' hammer-blow on August 8th, and we promptly entrained for Erin. Sufficient Mark V Tanks were not available, so we drew Mark IV's once more, and eventually, on August 21st, got into action on the high ground east of Bucquoy in a heavy mist.

Many of the Mark V machines, fitted with their epicyclic gearing, lost direction, while the old Mark IV Tanks (which we were so disappointed to have to take over again) proved our salvation. To change direction with the latter, one track had to be locked, so that once a machine was set on its right course there was no risk of wandering in circles.

Battle succeeded battle, each one confirming the astounding fact that the German resistance was weakening. But no one expected a decision in 1918, and on August 30th several of us were drafted home to Wareham to form the nucleus of the 19th Battalion. We were to complete our training by the end of the year, and, with many new battalions, to take our place in the great spring offensive of 1919, which was to give Germany her *coup de grâce*.

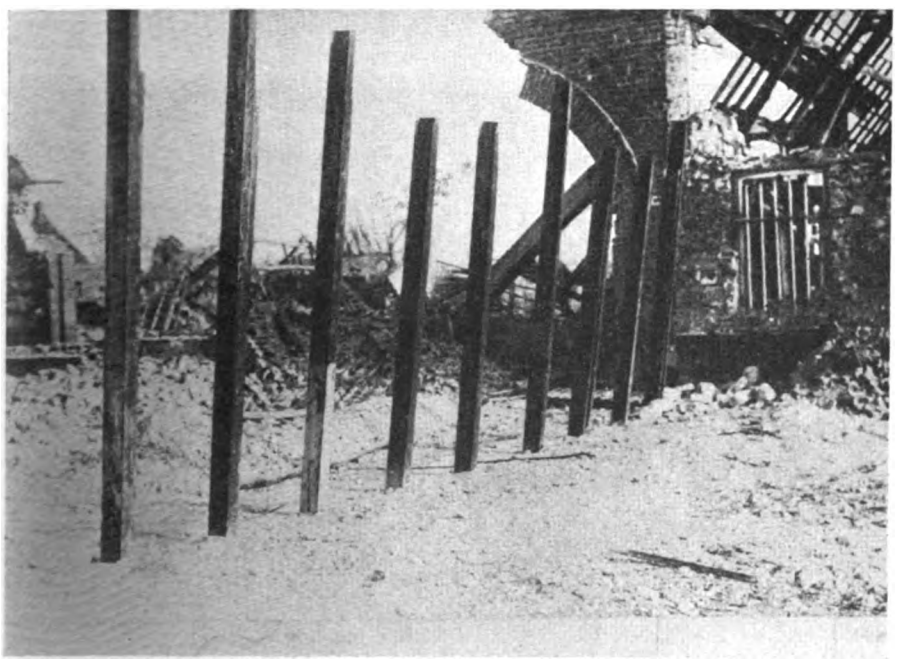

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A BARRICADE AT INCHY

Another method adopted in an endeavour to stem the advance of the Tank was that of the barricade, a row of stout metal posts driven deep into the ground in the hope that the machines would be unable to push them over. The barricade at Inchy, here illustrated, was erected in the spring of 1918. Inchy lies on the road between Cambrai and Le Cateau, and is about 6 km. west-north-west of the latter. The small Erdin river, a tributary of the Scheldt, runs through it.

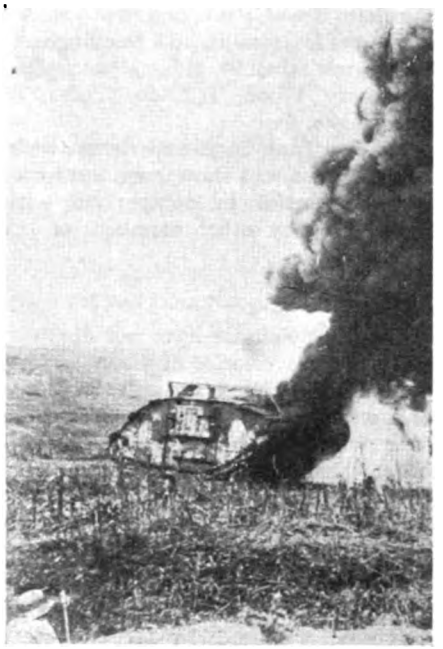

Photo: Photopress.

A BRITISH TANK AFIRE

Although the flame-throwers would occasionally set a Tank on fire, neither they nor the anti-Tank guns which were evolved proved an effective defence; and as the Tank neared perfection, it became, although not invulnerable—it is still not that—more and more deadly.

At Wareham in 1918 there came back one faint echo of the heroic beginnings of the War, faint indeed as Roland's hour. A company of German prisoners and a company of Conscientious Objectors, were put to work on the same fatigue. An hour later the German contingent arrived at Brigade Headquarters with a manifesto which read: "We, the undersigned, being good men and true, who have borne with our English brothers the burdens of war, see no reason why we should be so disgraced as to have to work with these cowards." The C.O. was amused and sympathetic. The Germans were given the afternoon off. They clicked heels happily, bowed with Teuton dignity, and marched off with vast contented smiles.

The news of "G" Battalion's progress gradually drifted back to us at home. We heard how toward the end of September many of our Tanks followed the selfsame routes to Bourlon Wood that they had taken at the original Cambrai battle. And soon after this came the Armistice.

But there are other anniversaries besides Armistice Day which I like to remember: earlier battles when we were eager, not tired; confident and in no way disillusioned.

Even nowadays, Hedgerley, Burnham,

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Farnham Royal, Penn, and Beaconsfield, are names less familiar in a Buckinghamshire "pub" than St. Julien, Poelcapelle, Sanctuary Wood, Hill 60, Ypres, or Poperinghe.

My own Tank Corps experiences were, as these memories show, long, but lucky and uneventful in comparison with those of many other members of the Corps.

Harking Back

The old memories have not dimmed, and the anniversaries of these battles, unheralded, unfêted, are still the source of a warm comradeship amongst those over whose tongues the "mild and bitter" has passed. Just as the dug-out was tolerable for its suggestion of a frowsty bar parlour, so to-day, conversely, the atmosphere of the country inn is more friendly when those in it have the War in common. Whenever the War is mentioned—whether by the jocose, the drunkard, or even the bore—there is a sudden animation. Even the lead-swinger of old, who now lies to his heart's content, or the man who boasts of his past rank in the pathetic consciousness that his one high endeavour is over and that he is now sinking to obscurity and failure—are all tolerated. These human weaknesses are forgotten, and only the fellow-dweller in that strange, remote world of twenty years ago is remembered.

Four out of five who speak are the flotsam and jetsam of that unnatural, violent period. Those whose mentality was formed in the War have developed little or no elasticity wherewith to accommodate themselves to the more subtle conditions of peace, where fate and luck play only an inconspicuous and obscure part. The valiant foe is now a commercial friend. "Jerry" is affable, and "Froggie" is irritable; "*Twas-erfs*" and "*A votre santé, monsieur*" have lost their affectionate significance—the honest simplicity of the old understanding is gone. We no longer refer sympathetically to "good old Fritz," and we are a bit suspicious of the ardent young Fritz of to-day. Politics and the Press have bidden us alter our judgments, and we are too tired and ignorant to argue why.

We who fought are corrupt with the old custom of the War, and we cannot comfort ourselves. But who can blame us that we still nourish that old, blind life within the brain; that the sound of a motor-cycle is still fraught with fearful expectancy of orders for action; or that our hearts are touched by the half-forgotten refrain of *Tipperary* from a charabanc as it rumbles past the low-ceilinged "pub" and on into the silence of the night?

Photo: Central Press.

THE TANK CORPS MEMORIAL, POZIÈRES

A photograph of the memorial taken in 1922, when the dreary battlefield of the Somme was still raw and abounding in relics. Notice the little model machines at the base of the obelisk. The earliest British Tanks in the Great War were of two kinds, known as "male" and "female." The males carried two 6-pounder guns apiece, and the females four Vickers machine-guns. The projections from the sides of each Tank, in which the guns were housed, were known as "sponsons."

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CHAPTER LIII

THE CAPTURE OF THE VIMY RIDGE

On the Western Front the spring of 1917 was eventful. The struggle on the Somme had long since died out, and in the early months of the new year both sides were busy with their preparations. The Germans upset many calculations by an unexpected retirement to the Hindenburg Line, a withdrawal that imposed upon the commanders of both the British and the French Armies a reconstruction of their plans. General Haig, who had intended to attack north and south of Arras, now found himself obliged to confine himself to a drive in the direction of the Vimy Ridge. The operations that ensued, described in the following pages, were among the most successful in the War and led to the capture of Vimy Ridge itself, a position that the enemy would have sacrificed much to hold.

HAIG'S intention for the spring and summer of 1917 was to improve his line from Arras past the Vimy and Messines Ridges to Ypres, in all of which areas the enemy held dominating positions. Joffre, on the other hand, wanted him to attempt the complete defeat of the Germans by a combined movement, in which the British should attack east and south-east on both sides of Arras, while the French were to strike north-east and north from Champagne, thus crushing the enemy between the two arms of a pair of pincers.

General Nivelle Takes Command

While these matters were being amicably discussed, two events occurred which had an important bearing on the course of future operations: the one a change in the French command, the other an unexpected German retirement.

Joffre, whose reputation had suffered from the evident lack of preparation at Verdun, was promoted Marshal of France and replaced by Nivelle, who had won his reputation in the field where his predecessor had failed.

Nivelle was an optimist, a man who refused to acknowledge the existence of obstacles if it were more convenient to ignore them. Unlike most soldiers—especially British—he spoke fluently, and possessed a good mastery of other tongues. He could put forward a plan lucidly and convincingly. Through that gift, and through the fame of his Verdun achievement, he was able to persuade, not only the French Government, but even more surely the British Government, that he held the recipe for victory.

He had, with the help of Mangin, achieved success in a very thoroughly-staged operation which had won him the Fort of Douaumont and 6,000 prisoners in a single day. He believed he could repeat the feat on a larger scale. And indeed, had the principles observed at Verdun been followed, and had the enemy not made disturbing interruptions, he might have fulfilled his hopes. Ludendorff, working on much the same foundations, was to be wonderfully successful in the following Spring.

Nivelle, who became Commander-in-Chief on December 12th, decided to make a considerable addition to Joffre's plans. He widened the French front of attack, and asked the British to widen theirs and also to extend their line. Haig was agreeable. If the proposed action should prove instantly decisive—and Nivelle's whole plan was based on that presumption—he would press forward in pursuit. If indecisive, he would transfer his efforts northward in accordance with his previous intentions.

An Omission by "L.G."

Mr. Lloyd George was one of the many who had fallen under the spell of Nivelle's persuasiveness and address. Being also a strong believer in the centralisation of command, he made Nivelle a virtual promise that the British Army would be placed under his control. Unfortunately, however, he informed neither Haig nor Robertson of his intention, and the first they heard of it was at a conference at Calais on February 26th, when the French unfolded a scheme providing for a French Generalissimo supported by a joint British and French staff.

Haig and Robertson, by their opposition, caused the proposal to be withdrawn, but they had reluctantly to agree to subordinate the British Army to Nivelle's control during the forthcoming operations. This episode had the deplorable effect of sowing mistrust between British Headquarters and both the British Government and French Headquarters—an effect which was not improved by the peremptory tone of Nivelle's instructions to Haig, one of which directed the British Commander to abandon his long-planned attack on the Vimy Ridge.

In the meantime, the enemy made a sudden move which threw the Allied plans to some extent out of joint. On February 23rd, he took the first steps in a retirement on a front of about 90 miles from Arras to Noyon; and, by April 4th, he had reached the Hindenburg Line—a very strongly-entrenched position which had previously been sited and constructed with infinite care.

Haig's plans were not much affected by the withdrawal. He had intended to operate north and south of Arras with the First and Third Armies respectively, the former eastwards, the latter south-eastwards. Now Allenby would have to strike east and north-east instead of south-east. The Fifth Army, whose rôle in the original plan had been merely to exercise pressure, might still be able to play its part, though perhaps in a less effective direction.

Immense were the preparations needed behind the British lines. 1,000 miles of twin signal-cable had to be dug in, 6 feet deep; for the provision of water, numerous pumping-stations had to be erected, many miles of pipe-lines laid, reservoirs constructed, and thousands of filled petrol-tins stored ready-to-hand. Coming down to the detailed work of a small unit—a battery—we find that ammunition-supply entailed that "practically every man had to be out each night working over very congested and bad roads, fighting through continual blizzards of snow and hail." As many as 2,000 rounds had often to be shifted in a night, "so what with shooting all day and ammunition fatigues at night, all ranks are pretty beat."[1]

All Roads Led to Arras

Supply, deployment, and reinforcement were rendered difficult by the fact that all roads converged on to Arras. This difficulty was cleverly overcome by extensive mining and tunnelling operations, advantage being taken of a system of underground sewers and of the

[1] Fraser-Tytler, *Field Guns in France*, p. 151.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GERMAN HELMETS

A wounded Scottish officer and his orderly sit on a trench parapet and examine three German helmets which they have acquired. This photograph was taken on April 10th, 1917, when the Battle of Arras—the first great conflict of 1917—was fiercely raging not far away. The conflict had begun on the previous day, and was to continue until May. Already, by noon on April 9th, nearly 6,000 enemy prisoners had been taken.

quarries and cellars in Arras, which were linked together by tunnels, "and the whole connected by long subways with our trench system east of the town." [1] No less than three supporting

[1] *Haig's Despatches*, p. 85.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PEEP-BO!

Men of the 10th Royal Fusiliers in a captured dug-out at Feuchy cross-roads, April 9th, 1917. On this inaugural day of the Arras and Vimy battles the British attacked north and south of Arras from Givenchy-en-Gohelle to Croisilles. An advance on a 12-mile front was made to a depth of 3,000 yards, and many places, in addition to Vimy Ridge itself, were captured.

divisions were accommodated in this underground barrack and issued therefrom to take part in the battle.

The battlefield of Arras consists of rolling downs, and is divided into two equal parts by the river Scarpe, which flows through marshy banks from west to east and passes just north of the town. Along the whole front the enemy were in possession of the higher ground: in the north on the Vimy Ridge, in the south at Monchy, Wancourt, and on the Hindenburg Line. This great entrenched zone joined the old line south-east of Arras and ran past Bullecourt to Quéant. Since it would be "turned" if Haig were successful east of Arras, Ludendorff was busy constructing a covering switch-line—the Wotan—running from Drocourt to Quéant.

Vimy Ridge is a great open down, seven miles long, containing three marked bastions separated by valleys—The Pimple in the north, Hill 145 in the centre, and Hill 140 in the south. To the west and south the slopes are easy and open, to the east and north steep and wooded. The ridge, fortified in two years of incessant toil by men of a race at once ingenious, thorough, and hard-working, was regarded as impregnable.

Three weeks before the attack the battle opened with a bombardment, from 3,000 guns, which grew daily in intensity, and included wire-cutting and some very effective gas-discharges. Allenby wanted to reduce the period to 48 hours, because he felt that 3 weeks' notice would eliminate the possibility of surprise and would enable the enemy to bring up reinforcements and strengthen his defences. He was, however, overruled.

Superiority of German Aircraft

The efficacy of the bombardment depended on air-observation. Unhappily, at this period German aircraft were definitely superior to ours in design—an advantage which enabled the hostile pilots to interfere so effectively with our observers that some of the wire lying in hollows and on reverse slopes remained uncut and greatly hampered our advance in certain areas.

The troops engaged consisted of the Third and First Armies. Allenby had the VII, VI, and XVII Corps, in that order from right to left, the last-named being north of the Scarpe. In reserve he had the XVIII Corps, and into his area had been brought the Cavalry Corps for use in the event of a successful penetration. Horne had at his disposal the Canadian Corps, and in reserve the XIII Corps.

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At 5.30 a.m. on April 9th the attack began. It was launched on a front of 15 miles, from Croisilles in the south to the Souchez river in the north. Moving closely behind a particularly effective barrage, our infantry stormed the greater part of the front-line trenches. At 7.30 a.m. the advance was resumed against the second objectives. Many of these were also captured, but progress was slow north of the Scarpe because of uncut wire, and south of that river owing to the fine defence of Observation Ridge and Railway Triangle.

The latter was not taken until 2 p.m.: but otherwise the enemy's second line, from Neuville-Vitasse to La Folie Farm, was in our hands by noon, at which hour our batteries were on the move to positions suitable for supporting attacks on the third objectives. By nightfall, nearly the whole of Vimy Ridge had been stormed, and we were firmly established in the German third line just north and south of the Scarpe.

Much greater success might have been won had not the weather broken. Heavy rain fell, rendering the ground soft and hindering movement, especially of batteries and transport. Storms of wind and falls of snow followed, and continued for several days, hampering operations still further and imposing great hardships on the troops.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TRENCH ORDERLIES

Here we are shown the trench "orderly room" of the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) at Guémappe, April 29th, 1917. On this particular day, which was a Sunday, less happened on the Western Front than, probably, on any other date in the month; and the only activity in the Arras sector was a successful continuation of the previous day's thrust toward Oppy.

The Limit of our Gains

On April 10th, the remainder of Vimy Ridge, except the Pimple, was taken, as was the whole of the third line system south of the Scarpe. Further advance was prevented by machine-gun fire from Monchy-le-Preux, Héninel, and Wancourt, with which our guns were as yet unable to deal effectively;

On the 11th, Monchy was captured, and that was the extent of our gains. To assist the Third Army, the Fifth Army launched an attack that day against the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt. The enemy's positions were penetrated, but the provision of support proved difficult, and our troops were consequently forced to return to their starting-line.

On the 12th, the Canadians stormed the Pimple, whose assault had been deferred until the rest of the ridge should have been made secure. In the south the villages of Héninel and Wancourt were secured. Hard fighting of a give-and-take nature continued until the 15th, when a halt was called so that communications might be re-established and artillery disposed for a renewal of the offensive.

The gains up to this point, which in fact marked the conclusion of the main battle, amounted to an advance of four miles along the whole front, the capture of 13,000 prisoners and over 200 guns, and the attraction to the British front of double the number of German divisions which had been there before the attack. The fighting at Arras,

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSSING THE SCARPE

Described officially as an "improvised bridge," the ramshackle erection which the troops are here seen negotiating bears more resemblance to a diving-board, and perhaps served as such before all the contingent had passed over. The scene is on the Scarpe near Blangy (eastern outskirts of Arras), and the photograph was taken during April, 1917.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

DUG-OUTS IN A SUNKEN ROAD

It would not be unjust to regard this as one of the most impressive "Then and Now" pairs in the whole of *Twenty Years After*, for time has changed hardly at all the sunken road here used for military purposes, and in its post-war state of mossy disuse it looks singularly striking. The road runs between Athies and Gavrelle, two villages respectively 4 km. east and 9 km. north-east of Arras. Athies lies on the north bank of the Scarpe between Blangy and Fampoux ; Gavrelle stands at a road-junction on the Arras—Douai route.

though it failed to obtain all the results anticipated, may be counted, in this its first stage, as the most successful offensive battle yet fought by the British armies in France.

We may turn now from the battle as a whole to the doings of the various formations and units.

On the right, the VII Corps comprised the 21st, 30th, 56th and 14th Divisions in line from right to left. It was in this area that the Germans had retired, and preparations for the attack against their new positions were therefore by no means so complete as they were further north. Only on April 4th, for instance, were field guns moved to ground from which they could bombard their first objectives.

Misfortunes of the 21st

The 21st Division, south of the Cojeul River, acted as pivot. It had only a short advance to make ; but, encountering uncut wire, it failed to reach Hénin Hill in its first bound as it had been intended to do. It was also baulked on the 10th and 11th ; and, on the 12th, when it succeeded, it was greeted on its objective by troops of the 30th Division. The latter, meeting with no opposition in the Cojeul Valley, had climbed the hill, to find it vacated and were luckily able to obtain cover in capacious German dug-outs from the bombardment which preceded the "successful" assault of their comrades of the 21st.

The 30th Division captured St. Martin as its first objective. On its left, the 56th, mainly Londoners, with the 167th Brigade on the right and the 168th on the left, stormed Neuville-Vitasse. Supporting battalions then leap-frogged to tackle the Hindenburg Line. They advanced at 10 a.m., well-supported by their divisional artillery, which had made a big stride forward after executing the initial barrage. This attack was meant to synchronise with that of the 14th Division further to the left ; while, on the right, the 30th Division was to follow in echelon as soon as Neuville-Vitasse had been made secure.

By midday the London Scottish had broken right through the Hindenburg Line. They then pushed 1,000 yards beyond it, where they were in touch with the 14th Division, which had carried the northern end of that stupendous fortification. Their right, however, was in the air, because both the 167th Brigade and the 30th Division had failed. Of these, the former succeeded in bombing the enemy out of the Hindenburg Line during the night ; but the progress of the latter was completely blocked by uncut wire.

On the 10th, the three divisions at-

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Photo: Keystone.

A RELIC WHICH DEFIES TIME

The part of the world traversed by this road came into prominence on April 23rd, 1917, when the British launched an attack on a front between Gavrelles and Croisilles. It had been intended to attack on the 21st, but high wind and poor visibility had prevented the essential co-operation of the R.F.C. with the artillery. Athies had already been captured, on April 9th, by the 9th (Scottish and South African) Division; and on the 23rd Gavrelle fell to the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division. It was retaken, in our final advance, on August 27th, 1918.

tacked again. On this occasion the 167th Brigade cleared the Hindenburg Line right across the front of the 30th Division, thereby freeing the latter for action. The 14th and the left of the 56th in their turn, however, made no progress. After a day devoted to clearing and "mopping up," another attack was delivered on the 12th. The 168th Brigade sent battalions to either side of Hill 90, which they captured, shouting loudly the password "Rum-jar" lest they should hurl bombs at each other. They then occupied Héninel and the heights to east of it.

Astride the Hindenburg Line

Moving level, the 169th, which had relieved the 167th, occupied Wancourt and extended the divisional line on the heights beyond, where it was in touch with the 14th Division. The right of the 56th was in contact with the 30th, and the latter with the 21st, so that the Corps front now lay along a high ridge astride the Hindenburg Line, and was facing south-south-east instead of east as originally contemplated. During the night, the 30th were relieved by the 33rd and the 14th by the 50th.

On the 13th, the attack was resumed. Unfortunately, the 151st Brigade, new to the ground, advanced with its left instead of its right on Wancourt Tower. Thus two brigades were crowded together on the same front, with a wide gap on their left. The enemy naturally profited by the occasion to inflict heavy casualties. Along the rest of the line, the arrival of strong hostile reinforcements prevented progress.

This was the end, on the right flank, of what is often termed the First Battle of the Scarpe. The troops had fought finely, carrying many strongly-fortified and heavily-armed positions. But, owing mainly to uncut wire, there had been the trend to the south already noted, and also a tendency to crowd towards the right. The Corps staff must have had unhappy moments unravelling some of the complicated situations which have been described, and in planning upon them a fresh course of operations.

The VI Corps contained the 3rd, 12th, 15th and 37th Divisions, of which the first three were in line and the last in Arras, prepared to go through the 12th to the attack of Monchy.

The front extended from the left of the 14th Division to the Scarpe. As with most of the other corps, there were four lines of objectives—by name Black, Blue and Brown, consisting of actual trench-systems, and a Green line up to

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

RETURNING FROM A RAID

A British raiding party returns to the lines through its own screen of wire after a raid, while an artillery barrage covers its retirement and checks pursuit. The practice of raids may be said to date from February 5th, 1916, on which day Sir John French issued a memorandum on the subject.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

OVER SHE GOES !

Duckboards being carried over a support-line trench at night by a fatigue party. This photograph was taken on January 12th, 1917, in the sector of the line west of Cambrai. It would be difficult to compute how many miles of duckboard were employed during the War.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT VIMY RIDGE

An exceptionally fine photograph of the 29th Canadian Infantry Battalion taken during the actual advance on Vimy Ridge, April 9th, 1917. By 6.30 a.m. on that date the whole front-line system of trenches above Neuville-St. Vaast, by La Folie Farm and Wood, had been taken.

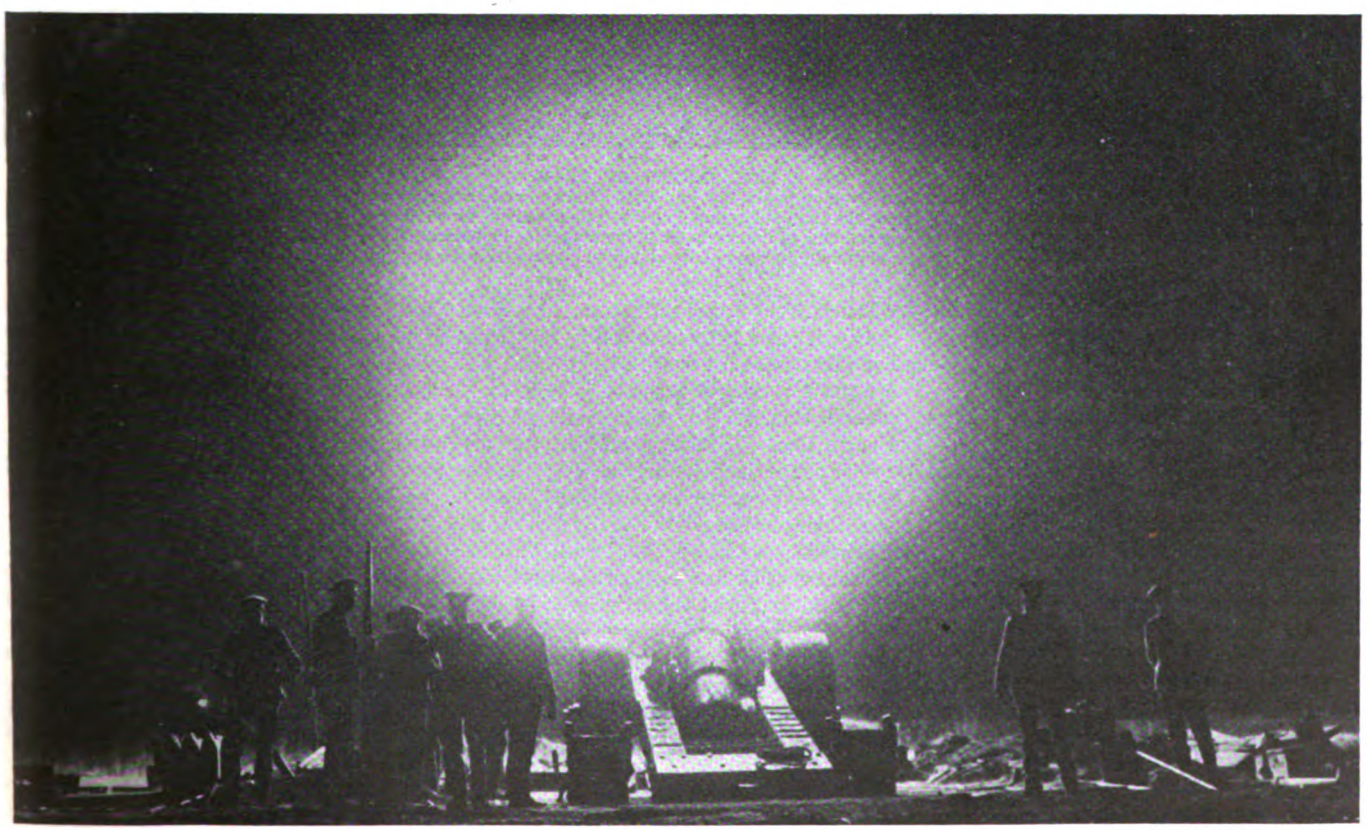

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DEATH BY NIGHT

This illustration reveals a 6-inch naval gun in action at night on Vimy Ridge, May 3rd, 1917. The statistics of ammunition manufactured during the War read almost like astronomical figures. The cost incurred in its production may be imagined.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON A HILL SOUTH OF FEUCHY

Two pictures taken in the vicinity of Feuchy have been given on pages 830 and 831. Here are two more, of which the one above shows a battery of 60-pounders firing in the open at Chapelle de Feuchy during the Battle of Arras. Chapelle de Feuchy is not another village, but simply a chapel standing at an elevated cross-roads some 2 km. south of Feuchy proper. One of the roads leads from Feuchy to Wancourt, and the other is the main Arras—Cambrai route. The crossing was therefore of importance, especially in view of its elevation. It marked the limit of our advance on the first day of battle.

which possible success was to be exploited.

The VI Corps's Advance

The principal feature in the Corps zone of advance was Monchy-le-Preux—a village on a high hill which dominated the surrounding country. Other important features were Observation Hill, Railway Triangle, and Orange Hill.

In dealing with the action of the VI Corps, it is convenient to begin with the left.

Here the 15th (Scottish) Division was faced with a succession of strong-points: Blangy, Railway Triangle, Feuchy, and Orange Hill. It was therefore allotted the relatively narrow front of 1,200 yards. Charging with their customary vim, the infantry of the division overran the nearer trenches, and, by 12.40 p.m., had captured the second objective with the exception of Railway Triangle, which was not taken till 2 p.m., and then only with the help of flanking fire from the 9th Division north of the river. At 2 p.m., the reserve brigade—the 46th—passed through to the assault of the Brown line. It encountered no serious resistance except on the left flank, where the advance was long held up by machine-gun fire from Feuchy Redoubt. Eventually, however, 2nd Lieut. Strachan, with five men, made a sudden rush and captured the redoubt, together with 17 prisoners. By 4 p.m., the third objective had been secured along its whole length, the distance so far covered being 4,000 yards, and the captures including 500 prisoners and 40 guns.

Field Companies of the R.E. appeared like magic to assist in consolidation, and were fortunate enough to find an enemy dump of material which provided all the necessary trench-stores on the spot. As was the case everywhere else on the battlefield, the work was carried on under appalling conditions: hostile shelling, deep mud, heavy snow, wind, hail, lack of greatcoats or protection of any kind. Yet the *morale* of the men, conscious of high achievement, confronted all these horrors and remained unshaken.

Monchy's Strong Resistance

On April 10th, consolidation continued. The 37th Division, which had passed through the right of the 15th the previous evening, on its way to the Green line, attacked Monchy in the morning. But, as the enemy had been strongly reinforced in men and machine guns, it failed to capture the village. Consequently, the 15th received orders to attack next day between Monchy and the Scarpe, while the 37th made a second attempt to take its objective.

The leading brigades of the 15th

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started at 5 a.m., in a blinding snowstorm which, though at first it covered them from enemy view, rendered maintenance of direction difficult. Soon they came under heavy fire on the flanks—on the left from machine guns north of the river, with which they could not deal, and on the right from the outskirts of Monchy.

They tended then to wheel half-right, partly because of the blizzard, and partly to tackle the enemy. The result was that the right brigade moved across the western front of the village and attacked it from the south, while the left brigade attacked it from the north. In the course of the day, these brigades were supported by the 111th Brigade of the 37th Division, by the Cavalry Corps, which delivered a dashing but costly and ineffective charge, and by four tanks, one of which survived to play a gallant and valuable part in the subsequent street-fighting.

The Germans offered a fierce and determined resistance in order to retain so important a point, and only after a prolonged struggle were they ejected. By nightfall, the British force, composed of cavalry, engineers, and parts of the 12th, 15th, and 37th Divisions—all mixed up and very short of officers—was holding a front east of Monchy, and busily consolidating. On the following morning the 15th Division, after three days' valiant fighting in bitter weather, was relieved by the 17th Division and withdrawn.

Praise for the Gunners

All the divisional histories give high praise to the gunners, partly for their particularly accurate barrage and counter-battery work, and partly because of the determination with which they advanced under great difficulties to afford the infantry continuous support. Here is an extract from the letter of an artillery officer, who was later killed :

" Continual storms of snow, hail, and rain do not make it any easier to move guns across country which has undergone a 5 days' intense bombardment. Albeit, we got 'em up somehow by relays, with twelve to fourteen horses in the guns, and the gunners harnessed to the waggons." [1]

On the right of the 15th, the 12th Division was allotted a zone of 2,000 yards, widening eventually to 3 000 yards. The chief obstacle in its path was Observation Hill ; and that was carried with surprising ease. The lead-

[1] Major F. Graham. Quoted in *The Fifteenth (Scottish) Division*, p. 127.

Photo : Keystone.

PANORAMA NEAR FEUCHY

A German redoubt stood at Chapelle de Feuchy in April, 1917, and in our attack on the 9th this was taken by the 12th (Eastern) Division. A memorial to the division now stands to mark the site, while nearby is Feuchy Chapel British Cemetery, containing 1,056 United Kingdom, 1 South African, and 26 Canadian graves. Feuchy itself also possesses a small War cemetery, recording 213 United Kingdom and 1 Canadian burials. It was a great disappointment to the cavalry massed on this side of Arras that their " big chance " hereabouts never materialised ; however, small bodies moving along the Scarpe captured a number of prisoners and guns.

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ing brigades encountered, however, about the Blue line, a staunch resistance which was overcome only with the help of the reserve brigade. The latter, which had come up by the Arras tunnel, debouching into No Man's Land, pushed on from the Blue to the Brown line, driving the Germans in disorder before it and capturing 22 guns. Some of the latter, with the assistance of an artillery officer, were turned on to the retreating enemy.

At the same time our own guns, finding harder ground here than elsewhere on the battlefield, came up at a gallop to support the attack on the Brown line. The assault was successful on the right, but was held up on the left by machine-gun fire until the 15th Division sent troops to bomb the trench from the north. By noon the whole of the divisional objectives had been taken, together with 1,200 prisoners and 41 guns—a highly satisfactory performance. Casualties numbered 2,018.

During this attack two remarkable individual feats were performed. In order to help his commanding officer to discover German dispositions in Hart Work, Corporal G. Moakes crawled forward, climbed into a trench, picked out a German, and brought him in. The information obtained from the prisoner was of great value in enabling our troops to be so disposed as to capture the work, and with it the remnants of its garrison, numbering 200.

He Killed a Whole Crew

The other incident: while the 7th East Surreys were consolidating a position, Sergeant H. Cator found his platoon was suffering severely from machine-gun fire coming from a trench opposite. Taking one man with him, who was immediately killed, he crossed the open, armed with a Lewis gun, and entered the trench. There he hunted until he found his opponents, and then, opening fire, killed the whole gun-crew. After that, he maintained himself in his forward position, thereby aiding the advance of other troops. He was awarded the Victoria Cross.

On the right of the 12th, the 3rd Division carried all its objectives, though not without heavy fighting.

The task of the XVII Corps was the capture of the southern extremity of Vimy Ridge, and of the low land along the left bank of the Scarpe. Chances of success were likely to be greatly influenced by the fortunes of the Canadians on the left.

The Corps was composed of the 9th, 34th, and 51st Divisions, holding the front in that order from right to left, and detailed for the assault of the Black, Blue, and Brown lines. In support was the 4th Division, which was to pass through the 9th on to the Green line.

The operation had been very carefully prepared. The enemy's strength had been tested by many raids, while the

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AWAITING THE WORD

British troops in Arras waiting for the order to move up to the line on the opening day of the battle (April 9th, 1917). The picture gives some notion of the town's battered state. It is built, to some extent, on its own underground quarries, and covers a very large system of tunnels, which were used and developed by the British Army.

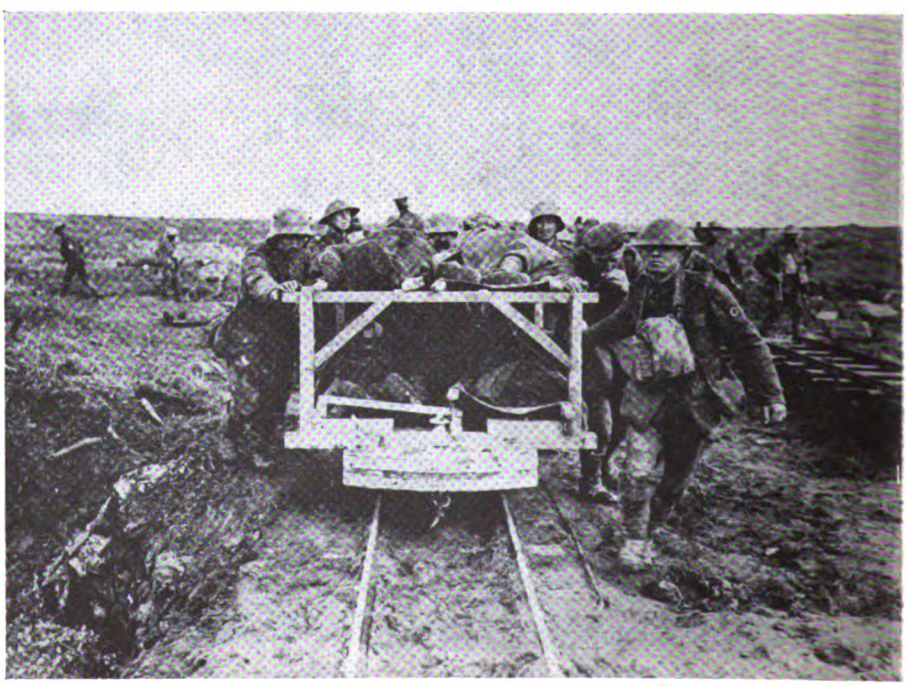

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

VIEWING THEIR HANDIWORK

An interesting photograph showing German prisoners helping to shift a trolley-load of British wounded along one of the light railways behind the line at Vimy. This battle-ground, like Hill 60, the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel, and various others, is a region where dug-outs and numerous war-time features have been kept in preservation.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CANADIAN SPOILS

A German gun-emplacement and its stores of ammunition as captured by the Canadians during their assault on Vimy Ridge. Notice the extensive remains of the brushwood screen used to hide the emplacement, and also the protective jackets still covering the shells. Upwards of a dozen villages, and many strategic points, were taken on April 9th.

simulation of attacks had brought down his barrages and disclosed the positions of his artillery to the counter-battery staff; and there had been a very thorough destruction of trenches and dug-outs. Only on the reverse slopes were there patches of wire uncut.

The 9th Division contained two Scottish brigades and one South African, and operated under a South African commander. Its task lay along the valley, where it had to capture St. Laurent Blangy and Athies.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CANADIAN CAPTURES

This photograph shows German prisoners, captured by the Canadians, being marched to what the official description—with an oddly prophetic ring—terms a "concentration camp." On Vimy Ridge only Hill 145 failed to succumb to General Byng's Canadian Corps on the great morning of Canada's glory; and that hill was taken the following day (April 10th). The above prisoners, it may be noted, look far from downcast.

Attack that Reaped Reward

The leading brigades went off with a fine rush. They carried the Black line easily, but had some trouble with the Blue, near which for a time they lay precariously, packed into 300 yards, between the friendly and the hostile barrages. They suffered, too, from flanking fire south of the river, until F Battery laid a protective smoke-screen for them. Later, they took their revenge by enfilading hostile trenches south of the Scarpe and assisting the 15th Division thereby. On capturing the Blue line, the enemy broke so badly that the assault of the Brown line became "an orderly procession," men marching at the slope. The only serious resistance offered was that of machine guns on Le Point du Jour.[1] That work, however, was rushed by a company of the K.O.S.B.'s, who were rewarded by finding a German lunch ready laid for them.

From the high hill, the Germans could now be seen in full flight. "What a victory! We had bitten 3 miles into a strongly defended line held by . . . best troops, the Bavarians. On ground of his own choosing, we had trounced him [the enemy] well. . . . We all thought the war was over—and then a sniper, hidden a few yards away, in a shell-hole, shot one of our best officers! He died—that sniper.

"Looking back was almost as fascinating as looking forward. Far below us lay Arras—poor, beautiful, mutilated Arras, lying there in the hollow like a dead swan. . . . It was completely commanded from the Point du Jour and one could see every movement in the town."[2]

The success of the division had been complete: losses few, an enemy routed, a larger booty than ever before—51 officers, 2,080 other ranks, and 17 guns. The pity was that it was not exploited.

A Hopeless Shambles

At 3.10 p.m., the leading troops of the 4th Division passed through to the Green line and captured it almost without a check. But on the 11th they attacked Greenland Hill and were repulsed. On the following day, therefore, at 5 p.m., the 9th attacked the same objective. The men had to form up in daylight and advance 1,700 yards in full

[1] The Memorial to the 9th Division has been erected on this spot.

[2] Croft, *Three Years with the 9th Division*, p. 117.

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view of an enemy reinforced and well-entrenched. They moved forward without adequate support, and attempted their hopeless task with a heroism worthy of all praise. They suffered heavily. It was a bad battle, fought two or three days too late.

The 34th Division attacked on a three-brigade front. The two brigades on the right carried all their objectives without any great difficulty. The 103rd Brigade on the left, however, met with serious resistance between the Black line and the Blue, especially where it (the brigade) joined the 152nd Brigade on the right of the 51st Division. In spite of some gallant work in the stalking of machine-gun detachments, in which Lance-Corporal Bryant of the Northumberland Fusiliers won a V.C., it was found impossible to advance beyond the Blue line before nightfall. Consequently, the centre brigade threw back a flank from the Brown line to the Blue, in order to form a connected front.

On the following morning, a joint attack organised by the 103rd and 152nd Brigades successfully reached the Brown line. The enemy then beat a rapid retirement; and patrols sent out to the Green line failed to gain touch with him. On the 12th and 13th, the Green line was consolidated, and patrols were pushed through Bailleul and Gavrelle. On the 14th, the division was relieved.

During the preparation for the attack, Sergeant Gosling, R.F.A., won the V.C. by a remarkable act of courage and quick-thinking. He was in charge of a 9.45-inch trench-mortar, when, owing to a faulty charge, the shell on being fired was projected only a few feet in front of the muzzle. Gosling immediately sprang from the emplacement, drew a fuse-key from his pocket, unscrewed the fuse, and threw it away before it had had time to detonate the shell. The fuse was set for 17 seconds, so he had to be very quick if he was to save his detachment.

An Amazing Coincidence

This was remarkable, but observe the sequel:

"The following day a shell landed in the emplacement and killed the entire detachment, with the exception of Sergeant Gosling, who at the time happened to be elsewhere." [1]

The Highland Division advanced on a front of 3,000 yards widening to 4,000 yards. On the right was the 152nd Brigade, on the left the 154th.

[1] *History of the 51st (Highland) Division, 1914–1918* (Bewsher), p. 152.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

"LUNCHEON IS NOW BEING SERVED"

Or, a study in expressions. The features on which pleasurable anticipation is writ thus large belong to men of the Lancashire Fusiliers, and the occasion of their rejoicing is a container of hot stew. The photograph was taken in the trenches (so-called, for they were in the "undiggable" area of Flanders) opposite Messines, and close to Ploegsteert Wood. The date given is March, 1917—a month during which things were mainly quiet hereabouts, German attention being concentrated on the withdrawal, further south, to the Hindenburg Line.

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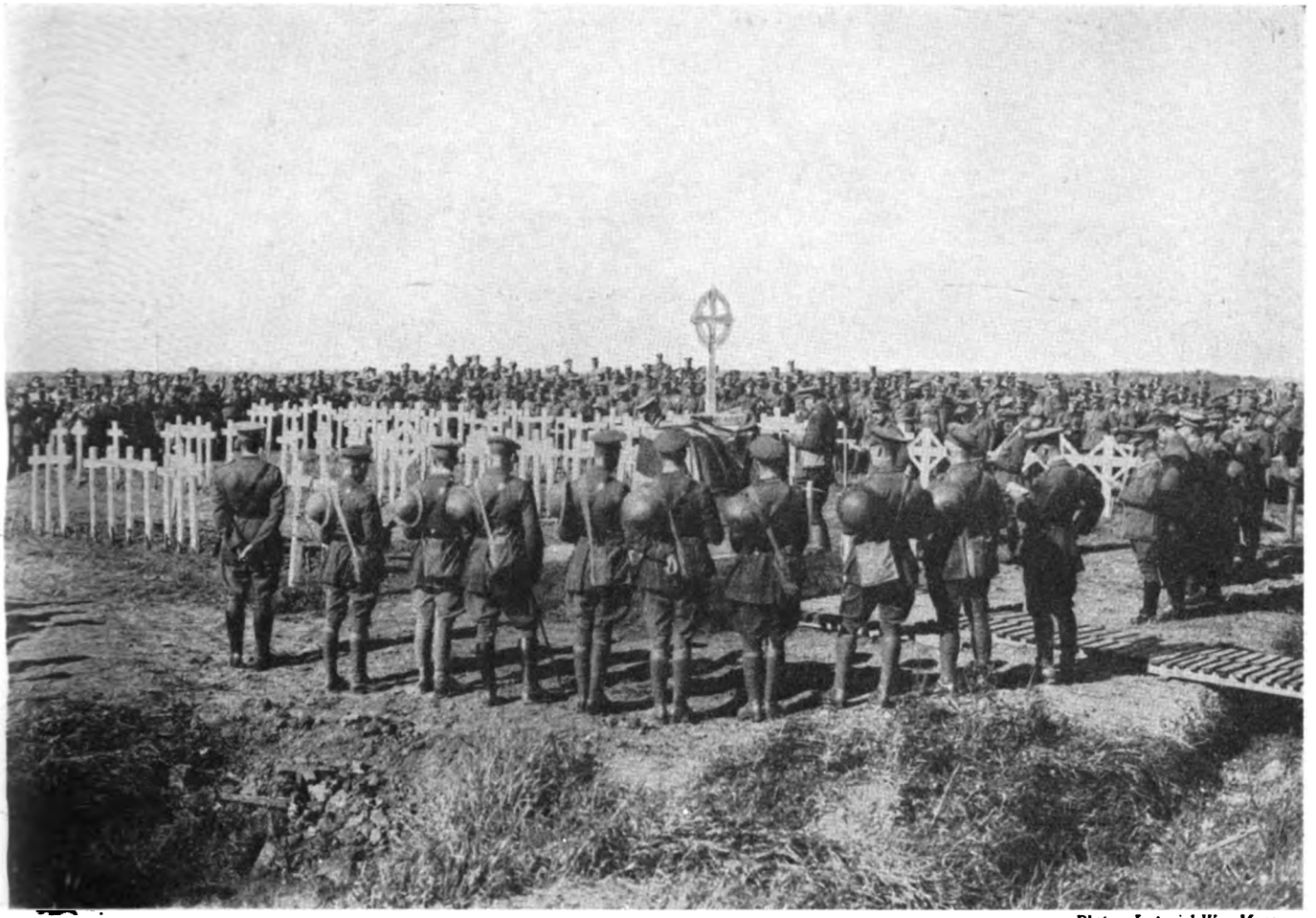

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

SIX MONTHS AFTER

There is a contrast indeed between this rough cemetery and monument on Vimy Ridge, and the stupendous memorial now adorning the spot. Taken on September 16th, 1917, this photograph shows the scene during a memorial service to men of the 87th Battalion, Canadian (Quebec) Regiment, who fell on the Ridge. The day of the service was a Sunday, and it was marked by heavy aerial fighting over the Western Front, in addition to Allied aerial bombing of Stuttgart, Colmar, and a number of other German civilian communities.

The troops were faced with a system of trenches so complicated that the barrage, excellent though it was, could not hope to deal with it completely. The action then " developed into a true soldiers' battle, in which the Highland infantrymen fought the Bavarian for possession of the field." [1]

The later actions of the 152nd Brigade have already been described. The nature of their earlier struggles may be gauged from the fact that, of the 6th Seaforth Highlanders, only one officer reached the Blue line, all the others having been killed or wounded. The 154th Brigade met with a resistance almost equally severe. It was reported to be in the Brown line at 6 p.m. ; but, on the 10th, when the 152nd tried to get into touch with it, this report was found to have been optimistic, and the 154th in fact was still far behind that line. Not until the night of the 11th/12th, and only after further heavy fighting, was the whole of the Brown line occupied. The Germans in this area had fought magnificently.

The outstanding feature of the Arras battle was the storming of the Vimy Ridge. The Canadians undertook the task, and in its successful execution won for themselves an immortal place in the annals of warfare. D'Urbal with the French Tenth Army had battled for it in May, 1915, and the French had again tried to seize it in the following September. But this dominating feature had remained in German hands—at once a menace and a challenge over a wide stretch of front.

Four Objectives in Succession

The front of attack was divided among the four divisions of the Corps in fairly equal parts, averaging about a mile apiece.

There were four successive objectives. The first two were trench-systems parallel to one another and to our front line, and distant from the latter, the one 500, and the other 1,000, yards. For the 3rd and 4th Divisions on the left, these were the only two objectives. The 1st and 2nd on the right had a third objective 500 yards beyond the second, and a fourth along the edge of the steep eastern slopes.

The Corps was faced with a very stiff task. Along the enemy's front line " scores of mine-craters, bristling with machine guns, formed an almost unbroken wall. Hill 145 and all the territory north of it was a maze of trenches and hidden tunnels. South of Hill 145," various woods and enclosures " together with the Schwaben Tunnel, which was 500 yards long and capable of holding at least 2,000 men, were united by a web of trenches into one great Gibraltar." [1]

[1] *History of the 51st (Highland) Division, 1914-1918* (Bewsher), p. 154.

[1] Harwood Steele, *The Canadians in France, 1915–1918*, ch. ix.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THESE MEN WIRE THE BATTLEFIELD

A photograph taken between Arras and Feuchy—the latter village being 5 km. further east along the Scarpe. A wiring party moves up to "do its stuff," as we now say, complete with spades, tommy-bars, and the characteristic corkscrew supports. The last-named was a remarkably useful invention, for one simply had to put the point of the screw in the ground, insert a bar through the loop or eye at the other end, and walk round and round exerting slight pressure. The post would then firmly embed itself, and be stopped by nothing short of rock.

There had, however, been adequate time for preparation, and support was furnished by over 700 guns, comprising, in addition to the Canadian pieces, a number of divisional artilleries and of groups of heavy artillery. Moreover, wire-cutting on the open, rising slopes was relatively easy, and, except on the left flank, proved to have been effectively performed. Eight tanks were to accompany the assault; only, however, to stick immovably in the sodden ground of the first trench-system. One British brigade—the 13th of the 5th Division—moved in the centre of the attack.

Here, as elsewhere, the barrage had been perfectly calculated, and provided a "cataract of flame and steel of indescribable power."[1] Close upon its heels swarmed the infantry; so close, indeed, as sometimes to suffer from our fire, but always—and this is the important point—close enough to ensure that the enemy never had time to man his trench after the barrage had passed beyond it.

[1] Harwood Steele, *The Canadians in France*, 1915-1918, ch. ix.

Opposition Swept Away

In the three southern sections, trenches, tunnels, and strong-points were stormed one after the other. Within an hour the first objective had been gained and was being consolidated. In front, the barrage hung like a curtain till the reserve battalions passed through and formed up behind it. Then it resumed its devastating march; and again all opposition was swept away. The second objective was wholly in our hands by 9.30 a.m. So swift had been the advance that a great harvest of prisoners was reaped in the tunnels, among whom was a brigadier caught in the act of shaving.

The reserve brigades now passed through their cheering comrades. Between them were two Regular battalions—the Royal West Kents and the K.O.S.B.'s—both of which put up fine performances in the new assault. This swept on as easily as the others had done; everywhere the havoc and ruin wrought by the heavier metal of the artillery were evident: trenches demolished, machine guns destroyed, dug-outs wrecked, tunnel-entrances blown in.

At 1 p.m., after a surge through Thélus, the third line was reached. An hour later, the advance was resumed, the eastern edge of the ridge was seized, and Farbus was occupied. Here our troops ran into heavy artillery. The enemy gunners fought gallantly, depressing the great muzzles of their weapons point-blank at their assailants

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and firing to the last. But the Canadians, flushed with victory, were not to be denied, and were able to add two 8-inch, seven 5·9-inch and three 4·2-inch howitzers to their trophies.

At 3.30 p.m., the final objective was in their hands; and then, before the eyes of the victors, there stretched the panorama of the Douai Plain—wide, green, far-reaching, a vista of country unseared by the hand of war. Batteries were to be seen hastily limbering-up, and transport in full flight, mingled with fugitives from the ridge.

Had ground and weather permitted, cavalry might, perhaps, have been launched with success at this point. But none was present; and, a definite limit having been set to the Canadian advance, the only immediate advantage that could be taken of the situation was the despatch of strong patrols to the nearer villages of the plain.

A Torrent of Fire

On the left, the state of affairs was wholly different. Preparation had, unexpectedly, proved much less effective than elsewhere, and consequently the 4th Division, as it charged over the trenches, encountered a torrent of gun and small-arm fire. The troops pressed on in spite of heavy losses, but were soon brought to a halt by uncut wire. On either flank of this, intrepid men maintained the assault; but the denizens of dug-outs and tunnels, having now been given ample warning, poured forth to counter-attack the depleted ranks of their opponents.

Backwards and forwards the struggle swayed until dusk, when the 85th Battalion—a raw unit, new to battle, and unsupported by guns—came up, and, plunging into the fray with the bayonet, turned it in our favour. All night and through the following day the bloody conflict raged, the Canadians steadily wearing down the German resistance until, by 7 p.m., all objectives were in their possession.

The Pimple remained, however, to be taken. Its assault, which had been left until the rest of the ridge had been secured, was delivered on the 12th through liquid mud and in a blinding snowstorm. Luckily for us the wind was behind us and in the Germans' faces. "Like wraiths out of the storm our men bore suddenly upon them. The 46th Battalion joined issue hand-to-hand with the Prussian Guard who came out to meet them, and wiped them out with the bayonet."[1] The Hill was won by 9 a.m., and then the whole ridge was in our hands.

So ended this epic struggle, which was one of the finest episodes of the

[1] Harwood Steele, *The Canadians in France 1915–1918.*

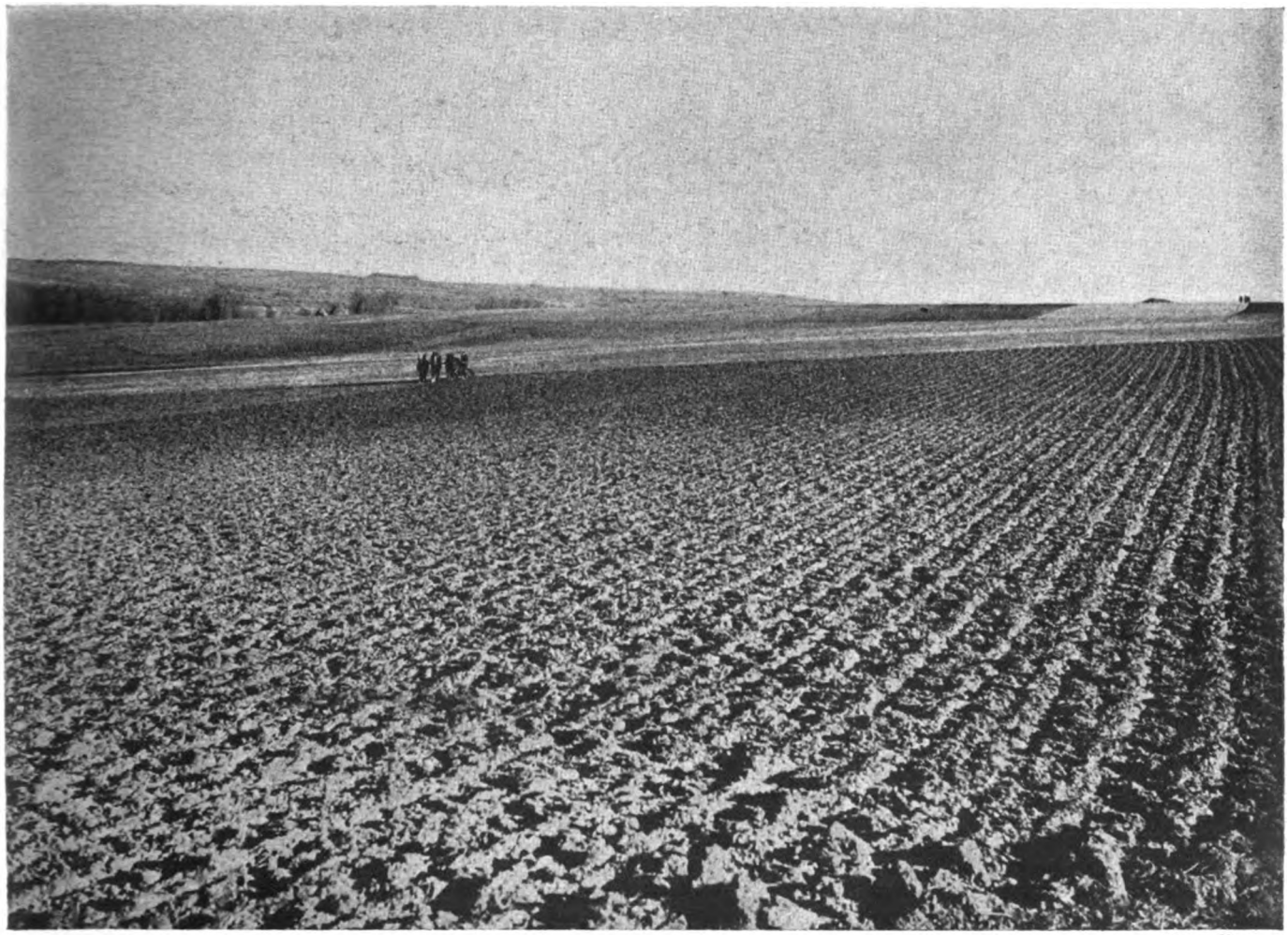

Photo: Keystone.

THESE MEN PLOUGH THE CORNFIELD

The origin of the corkscrew supports seen opposite appears to be wrapped in obscurity, even in regard to which side was the first to use them. They were, however, employed by us as early as 1915, for fixing with entanglements and for pegging down the portable steel-framed, canvas-covered hangars used by the R.F.C. The scene of both these photographs is the vicinity of Railway Triangle, which at the date of the war-time view (May, 1917) was some 5,000 yards behind the firing-line.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

CANADIANS HALT FOR FOOD

Canadian troops of the 3rd Infantry Battalion enjoying a meal in a field just outside Étrun, on May 3rd, 1918. This village, which is seen in the background of the picture, lies 4 km. north-west of Arras, just off the St. Pol road and immediately south of Marœuil. It was thus well behind the more unpleasant part of this sector, although near enough to it to suffer from the longer-range German guns which always delighted in making things warm for troops out of the line or on the way up to it.

War. The skill in conception and daring in execution which marked the operation could hardly have been surpassed, and are not to be measured by the mere capture of 4,000 men and 40 guns ; for prisoners and material often fall an easy prey in war. The true glory of the achievement lay in the natural strength of the fortress conquered, in the long and careful preparation of its defence, and in the fact that it was manned by first-class troops who regarded its retention not only as of vital military importance, but also as a matter of national prestige.

Canada has displayed a just pride in the triumph of her troops in their first essay as an army. By choosing the Vimy Ridge as the site of the beautiful monument which she has erected in honour of her glorious dead, she has fitly commemorated one of the most stirring episodes of 1917.

On the Subject of Cavalry

At this point it is not unsuitable to insert in our narrative a few words on the subject of cavalry. Throughout the War on the Western Front, where cavalry and horse artillery provided, between them, both commanders-in-chief and many of the army commanders —Allenby, Gough, Horne, Byng—a decisive operation on the part of cavalry was confidently anticipated, and was assiduously prepared for each offensive. It is just possible that, had the weapon been applied at exactly the right moment and at exactly the right spot, it might, on one or two occasions, have proved of real value.

The one great condition, requisite for success, in the circumstances prevailing in France, was that the enemy should have been not only defeated, but routed. There were occasions, indeed, on which fresh infantry, brought up rapidly, might have caused this condition to materialise. Unfortunately, however, it was the cavalry who were asked to change defeat into rout—a task beyond their powers. In general, they were thrown into action either too late or too soon, either after a sudden and priceless opportunity had come and gone, or before the hostile ranks had been sufficiently shattered.

Arras furnished no exception to this rule. Kavanagh's three cavalry divisions assembled west of the town with the idea of breaking through on both sides of the Scarpe—the 1st to the north, directly Fampoux should be captured, the 2nd and 3rd to the south as soon as the passages of the Cojeul and the heights of Monchy-le-Preux had been won.

Hoping for a Chance

Trenches were bridged and lanes for the horsemen laboriously cut through

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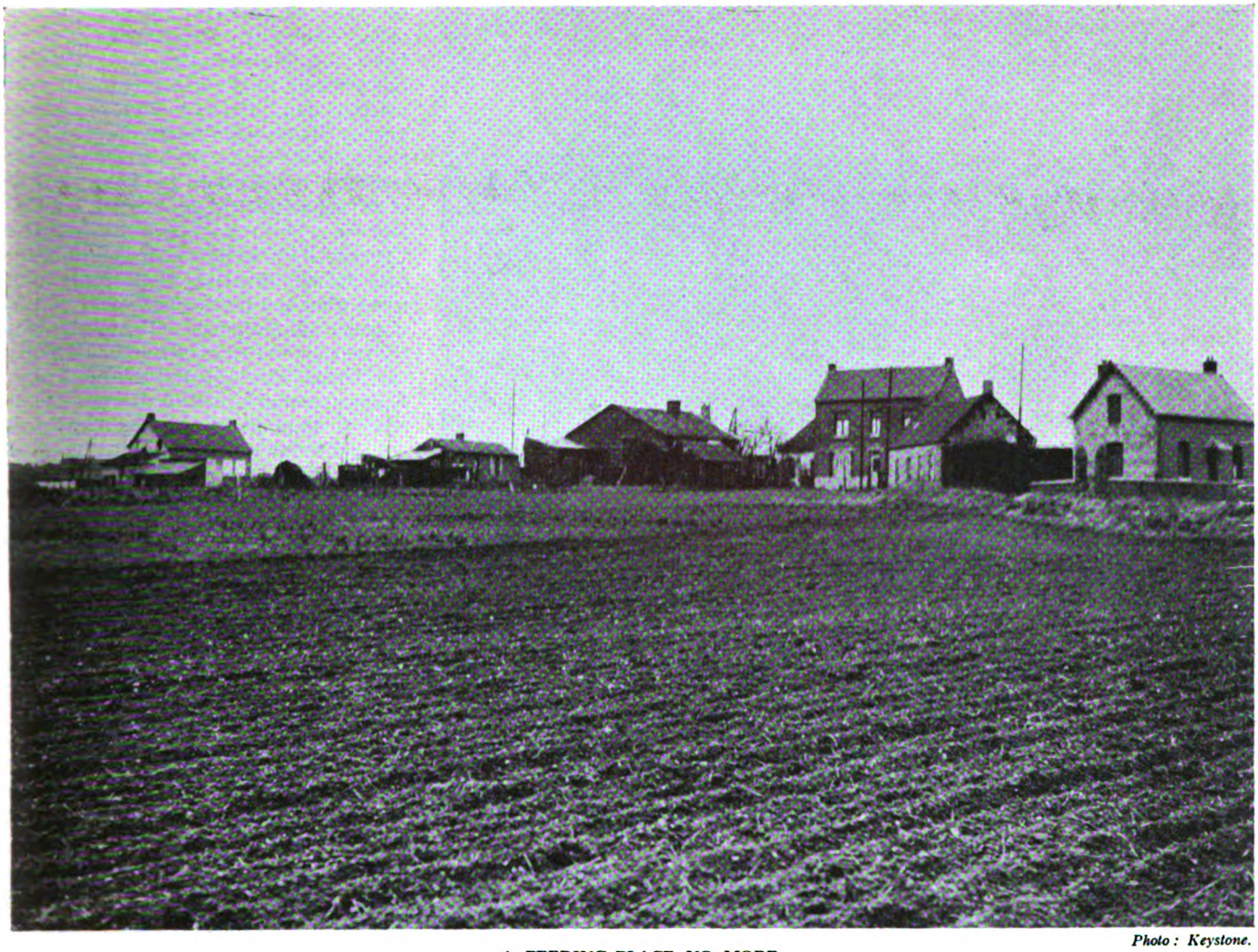

Photo : Keystone.

A FEEDING-PLACE NO MORE

Just as the war-time history of Étrun is characterised by the complete absence of any noteworthy happening, so is its post-war appearance devoid of any outstanding feature. As in the case of many another resurrected town and village in the devastated areas, Étrun was rebuilt more for utility than for beauty. There is no British cemetery here, although a few furlongs to the east is one begun by the 51st (Highland) Division in April, 1917, and named after Anzin-St. Aubin.

the wire. Daily they toiled forward, seeking the opportunity that never came. In the process they endured much loss and cruel hardships : not only the cold, the snow, and the mud, but also the sight of their suffering horses, brought about a general sense of frustration due to their special vulnerability to attack, whether by bullet, shell, or bomb. All these factors combined to cause unavailing sacrifice to a magnificent body of men.

Here is an account by an eye-witness of the charge at Monchy. " We saw the whole of the Cavalry Division advancing across country towards Monchy-le-Preux. It appeared as if the leading brigade, or at any rate regiment, reached that village, but the remainder were still moving forward when they came under tremendous shell-fire. This was one of the most thrilling sights I have ever seen." [1] The other two brigades then wheeled round and retired. Those who reached Monchy fought gallantly there and helped in its retention ; and the 3rd D.G.s charged and captured a battery. But that was the sum of the success won.

On the 11th April, the same writer took part in the move of the 1st Cavalry Division in support of an attack north of the river. " I was told," he says, " the advance was to be attempted irrespective of whether we heard if the infantry was successful, and that we were to follow, mounted, immediately in rear of the barrage."

Some cavalry did reach Fampoux, where they sheltered unhappily till nightfall. An officer's patrol sent forward to the station had all its horses killed the moment it emerged from the buildings.

Yet, two days earlier, there seems to have been a chance—at this very spot. Colonel Croft tells us : " One could see half the world, and everywhere there were flying Boches." The telephone, he says, spoke to Frank Maxwell—a Brigadier of the 9th Division : " Are the Boches on the run ? "

" Yes."

" Is cavalry good business ? "

" Yes, ten thousand times yes, but it must be done *now*. Too late to-morrow. . . . Why can't we go on ? " [1]

And Maxwell might have been expected to know. Though a foot-soldier for the nonce, he was a cavalryman by profession, a brilliant one at that, and a V.C. to boot. Some of the cavalry he

[1] *History of the Queen's Bays*, p. 379. (Letter of Capt. J. J. Kingstone.)

[1] Croft, *Three years with the 9th Division*, p. 117.

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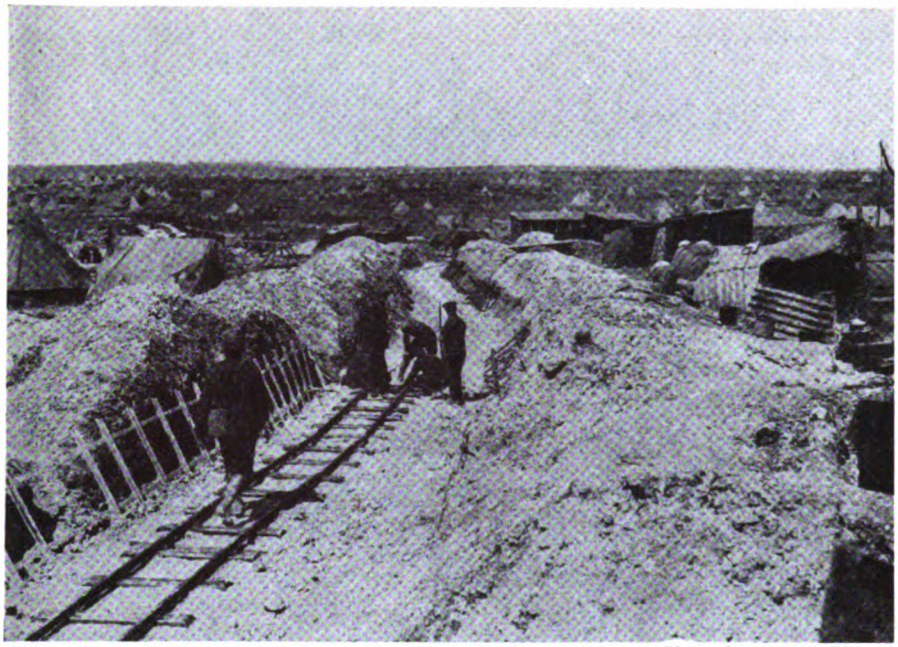

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

OVER CAPTURED GROUND

Canadian soldiers are seen here in the course of laying a light railway over some of the ground recently won at Vimy, while tents and large numbers of horses fill the background. These light lines were in appearance somewhat like a child's overgrown toy, being set down or taken up in short lengths with the sleepers permanently attached.

was looking for were 16 miles behind the line when the attack was launched.

The Question of Exploitation

In all official reports, the weather was the spoilsport. But it seems that on this, as on many other occasions on either side in the Great War, the leaders, after a long series of defeats or partial successes, allowed themselves to be surprised by victory, and failed to exploit it.

It is not possible, on a far-flung battlefield, to discover in what sector the hostile line will definitely be broken; nor is it by any means clear that cavalry is a suitable arm for a modern pursuit. There are, however, two questions which every commander must set himself if he is ever to turn local success into decisive victory. They are: "how shall I discover the fracture?" and "how shall I draw profit therefrom?"

We may now turn to the enemy's retirement. The Germans had planned this in order to escape from an uncomfortable salient, and in order, by straightening their line, to economise men. They had intended to start in the middle of March, but the continued pressure of our troops was rendering life intolerable on the old Somme battlefields, and they therefore began a partial withdrawal on the 23rd February.

They were followed cautiously. Pursuit of an active enemy over a country covered with wire and trenches is inevitably a slow process. The guns can hardly move. Without them the gallant leader, trying to keep the enemy on the run, has to take desperate risks. He may win through once, twice; but is certain, sooner or later, to fall a victim to the concealed sniper or machine gun. Consequently, casualties among officers were relatively high: in the 62nd Division during March, for instance, 35 officers to 300 men.

As the retirement proceeded, explosions were seen to occur behind the German lines in increasing numbers; and it was evident that something more than the mild withdrawal of the moment was intended. On March 17th, the movement became pronounced along the whole front of the Fifth Army. Haig suspected a plan to shorten line in order to accumulate forces for a counter-stroke further north. Against such a contingency he therefore withdrew divisions out of the pursuing line into reserve, and issued a warning against rash procedure.

The Enemy Falls Back

In the Fifth Army, small advance guards of all arms took up the pursuit, while the main bodies remained for the most part in entrenched positions—a method somewhat dangerous to the advance guards. In the Fourth Army, further south, cavalry kept touch with the retiring enemy while bridges over the Somme were rebuilt. Thus, partly

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HOME, JAMES!

A homing-pigeon being released from a Canadian trench on May 17th, 1917. These often (if unconsciously) heroic birds performed valuable services throughout the War, and many a man owes his life to them. To take a single example, it was a pigeon-message which on July 1st, 1916, brought water and ammunition to the 63rd Brigade (21st Division) before Fricourt, at a time when the whole brigade seemed faced with disaster.

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under pressure and partly of his own free will, the enemy fell back on the Hindenburg Line, devastating the country and mining the roads as he went.

In spite of his efforts to delay us, we moved faster than he expected, although, after the years in the trenches, neither commanders nor troops were prepared for open warfare. Heavy batteries, having " scrounged " rails and built carriages for their guns, were across the shell-stricken area almost before the infantry.

But movement was hampered, owing to faulty staff work, by a disastrous block on the great Albert—Bapaume road. For 24 hours a solid mass of troops, transport, and guns was densely packed into three-quarters-of-a-mile of road, so that it took a vehicle 9 hours to filter through. Enemy planes had the chance of a lifetime, but, by a stroke of luck, none appeared.

It was soon evident that the Fifth Army, from the direction and pace of its movement, might be able to strike an effective blow in the Arras battle. By driving a hole into the Hindenburg Line near Quéant, it might roll up the whole Wotan (Quéant-Drocourt) switch. But two things were necessary: namely, sufficient strength, and sufficient time for preparation. The Army had now been reduced to two corps—the II Anzac and the V. It was widely distributed, and movement and supply of heavy artillery over cratered roads was difficult. Gough, however, offered to attack, and the operation, after two postponements, took place on April 11th.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

A party of Canadians, of assorted shapes and sizes, makes a little tour of attractive Vimy after the capture. The village was taken on April 13th, 1917, after which it was not seriously threatened until the enemy thrust of the following spring. Then, on March 28th, 1918, the Germans made an attack toward the Ridge, but were repulsed with great loss.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DINNER HOUR

While a sentry with fixed bayonet keeps watch over the snowy wastes of No Man's Land, his pals cast envious eyes upon the proud possessor of a loaded mess-tin; and in the foreground a nonchalant comrade combines the pleasures of tobacco with those of cutting bread. The period of this drama is March, 1917; the scene of it, the line near Arras; the *dramatis personæ*, the 6th Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment.

Australians and the Switch-Line

The plan was that the 4th Australian Division, assisted by 12 tanks, should attack in the re-entrant between Bullecourt and Quéant, and that, when these troops had entered Bullecourt, the 62nd Division should send a detachment into that village and toward Hendecourt. The Australians, after capturing the two main hostile lines, were to move on Riencourt, and then to throw back a flank to face the Wotan switch.

Anzac Corps headquarters strongly protested. The wire was insufficiently cut. They doubted the value of the tanks. The plan was too complicated. Preparations were evident; yet only the expectation of complete surprise could justify assault in an area flanked by machine-gun fire from projecting trenches.

Gough, however, insisted. The 4th Australians—a particularly fine division—attacked in a most gallant and skilful fashion, and, under incredible difficulties, broke through the wire and captured the first objective. There, however, the troops were isolated. They were too weak to make a further advance, and by daylight, over completely open ground, it was impossible

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HOWITZER IN ACTION

A 9·2-inch howitzer in action at Tilloy-les-Mofflaines during the Battle of Arras, April, 1917. This village forms an eastern suburb of Arras, on the Cambrai road. At the start of the battle it was in German hands, but was captured on the opening day (April 9th) by the 3rd Division, followed by the 37th. To have moved a heavy howitzer so rapidly up to the ruined village on the heels of the infantry was something of an achievement. Tilloy-les-Mofflaines was again partly in German hands from March to August, 1918, when the enemy almost regained in this sector the line he had been holding prior to his withdrawal in 1917.

to supply and reinforce them. Heavily counter-attacked, they were forced to withdraw with the loss of 3,000 men, who were for ever irreplaceable.

The tanks did not prove a success, partly because they were new to the work, and partly because the arrangements for drowning the noise of their approach miscarried. They were practically all destroyed before they had penetrated the wire. The artillery, misled by reports of observers that Australians had been seen deep in the hostile lines, were afraid to put down barrages where they were needed for repelling the counterstroke. The condition stipulated for the co-operation of the 62nd Division—the capture of Bullecourt—never arose. April 11th was in fact a day of unrelieved disaster.

Ludendorff's Sound Policy

The Germans, for their part, had completed their retirement without undue loss, and had, on the whole, reaped the expected profit from their strategy. In particular, they had disorganised the arrangements for the great French offensive in the south. Their action, with its devastation of the country and withdrawal behind impregnable entrenchments, had features in common with Wellington's procedure at Torres Vedras. There are conditions in war in which a rood of land may have to be held at any sacrifice. There are others where it may be wise to surrender a principality without firing a shot. Soundness of choice is the hall-mark of the leader; and here, as elsewhere, results place Ludendorff in a high category.

Now from great things to small. Major Adams, of the 88 the Siege Battery, used to carry a stick with a notch cut on it for every German he was sure his battery had killed. Being scrupulously accurate—not to say pessimistic—and but rarely setting eyes on the enemy, his stick showed but a single notch for some two years' work. One day, however, after supporting some Australians in the successful capture of a village, he found he had still an unfired round in a gun. Looking for a suitable target, he chose a far-distant sugar-factory, and, loosing off against it, scored, by one chance in a hundred, a direct hit. When we advanced next day, 25 killed and 15 wounded were found in the building.

General von Moser, commanding the Bullecourt sector for the Germans, thought our troops were probably

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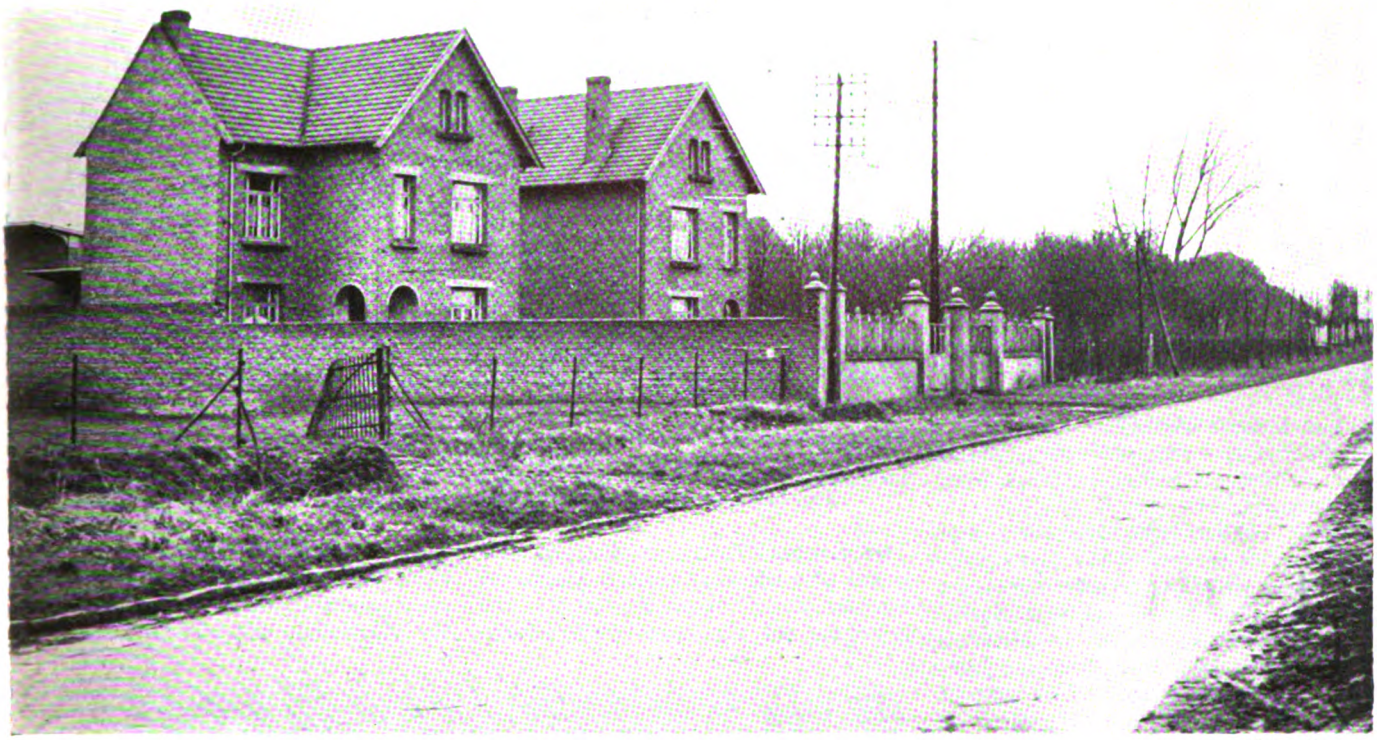

Photo : Keystone.

TILLOY-LES-MOFFLAINES

A glimpse of modern Tilloy-les-Mofflaines taken on a pouring winter's day. The place is now distinguished by no fewer than three British cemeteries, involving the fallen of many divisions. Tilloy British Cemetery contains over 1,600 graves of United Kingdom, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, Newfoundland, and South African dead. Bunyans Cemetery, begun in April, 1917, by infantry units, and used by the 62nd and 63rd Brigades, R.F.A., contains 54 graves. And lastly, Houdain Lane Cemetery, made by units of the 12th (Eastern), 15th (Scottish), and 37th Divisions, records 76 burials, of which 2 are Canadian and the remainder United Kingdom.

depressed after the repulse of their attack on the 11th ; and he noticed that our forward line was thinly held. It seemed to him, therefore, that a vigorous sortie might be successful, and might result in restoring the German morale, which had suffered in the long retreat, as well as in drawing away British reserves from the sorely-pressed German front east of Arras. Accordingly, on the 15th April he launched an attack with four divisions against our line between Noreuil and Hermies.

A Thinly-held Front

The British line was held by the Australian Corps—by 4,000 men in the line against 16,000 in the attack. The 1st Australian Division was very widely distributed from Hermies to Lagnicourt, the front being defended by piquets 6–12 strong at intervals of 100–150 yards, with company supports three-quarters-of-a-mile in rear. On its left, the 2nd Division relieved the 4th only on the night of the 14th, and so was new to the ground. Thus the German prospects of success stood remarkably high.

The attack was delivered just before dawn. Over the greater part of the front the enemy broke the piquet-line, but was stopped by the supports. His biggest success was obtained at the point of junction of the two divisions. There he advanced through Lagnicourt and captured no less than 7 batteries of field artillery.

Continuing his advance, he attempted to take the heavy guns in Morchies, but the commander of the 14th Brigade R.G.A. there, distrustful of the measure of security provided on his front, had enjoined special precautions, and had organised all men who could be spared from the guns into a rifle company. Moreover, the Australians on either side of the gap threw back protective flanks and fought with desperate gallantry. Smitten in flank by machine guns and in front by 6-inch and 8-inch howitzers firing point-blank, the attack broke down.

Australian reinforcements arrived, and a counterstroke developed. The guns were recaptured nearly intact. Observers from the heavy batteries pushing forward obtained priceless targets, especially as the enemy retired through the wire. For the Germans, the day which had opened so auspiciously ended in disaster. They had suffered 2,313 casualties against our 1,010.

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The Australians were caught unprepared, but they redeemed their lack of precaution by a magnificent resistance. Three V.C.'s were nobly won in this engagement. Sergeant Whittle, of Newland's Company, which was fighting a fierce battle, facing both ways, suddenly saw a machine gun being brought into action to enfilade the road. Recognising the grave danger, he dashed at it, killed the crew before they could open fire, and brought in the gun.

Two Helpful Aviators

The other two awards of the coveted decoration were made to officers who, by their example and leadership, inspired a staunch resistance to overwhelming odds. Two aviators—Buckingham and Cox—also rendered valuable service in reporting targets to the heavy artillery from dawn onwards, and in attacking enemy groups with machine guns. German accounts speak unhappily of their attentions in the latter respect.

Von Moser's sortie can hardly have stimulated the morale of his men, nor did it draw a single British battalion from the Arras front.

Haig, content with the early and considerable success of the first operations, now wished to transfer the centre of gravity of his efforts northwards. The comparative failure of Nivelle's great attack in the south forced him, however, to continue striking east of Arras, to prevent the dispatch of German reinforcements to the French front.

His altruistic action entailed costly sacrifices. The Germans, rapidly bringing up fresh divisions, now opposed him in great strength. Battles raged fiercely, and our successes were counted no longer in miles, but almost in inches. Particularly violent struggles took place round Monchy, which the Germans strove in vain to recapture ; in the area Roeux—the Chemical Works—Greenland Hill, which never passed wholly into our possession ; and round Fresnoy, which was won and lost and won again.

In the end, all the high ground that Haig had wanted in the first instance was in his hands. But the strategic results were negligible, and the cost in casualties, after the resumption of the battle, was prodigious.

In these operations, only the Second Battle of Bullecourt stands out clearly by itself. Fought on the 3rd May, on the right flank of an attack delivered by 14 divisions on a front of 16 miles, it developed into an isolated and bitter conflict.

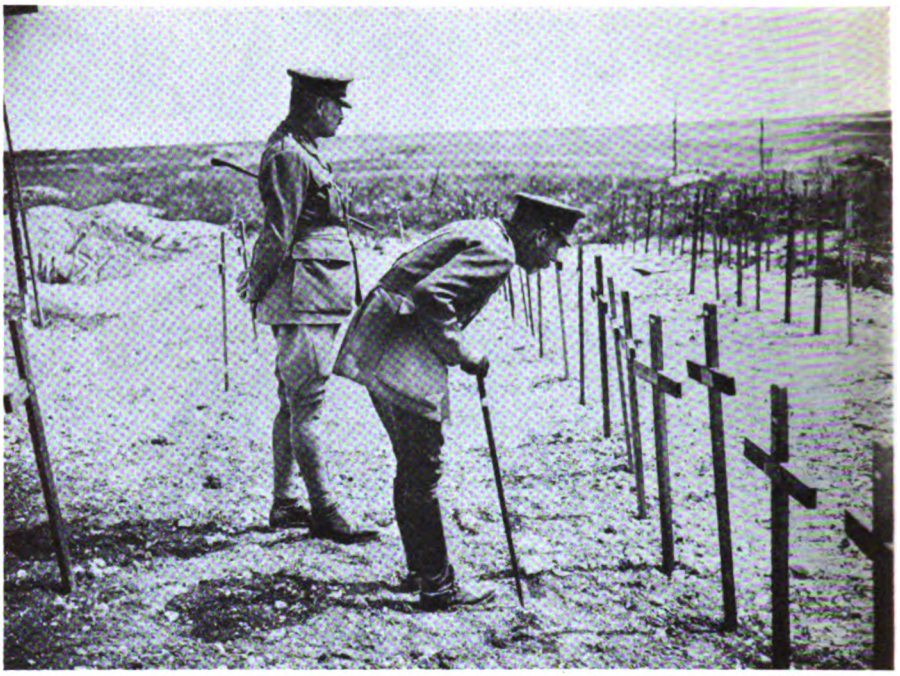

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

KING GEORGE V AT THIEPVAL

King George is shown here with General Byng, studying the inscription over one of the graves in a Thiepval cemetery. The date is July 12th, 1917, two days before His late Majesty's return from his fourth visit to the Western Front. Incidentally, this was the date on which Hindenburg and Ludendorff, from Kreuznach G.H.Q., telegraphed their joint resignation to the Kaiser.

The Second Battle of Bullecourt

The plan was that the 2nd Australian Division, attacking on the right, in the old re-entrant, should move up to Riencourt, and that the 62nd Division should capture Bullecourt, strike toward Hendecourt, and then wheel right, pivoting on the Australian left. The heavy artil-

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

TRANSPORT—HORSE AND OTHERWISE

A scene in the Arras region on April 11th, 1917, when the battle was in the course of its third day. A long line of army carts, extending far into the distance on one side of the road, is matched by a correspondingly long column of motor lorries on the other. April 11th saw the capture by us of Monchy-le-Preux and La Bergère, while tanks penetrated Bullecourt ; the latter village, however, had later to be evacuated.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT GAZE

During the Battle of Bullecourt—a part of the greater action of Arras—an officer of the 22nd Australian Machine Gun Company settles himself on a sandbag for a lengthy observation of the enemy wire. Bullecourt, first penetrated by us, as stated at the foot of the previous page, on April 11th, 1917, was not captured until May 17th.

lery, greatly strengthened, had already reduced Bullecourt to a rubbish-heap. The wire had been well cut, not only by the new flat-bursting fuse, but also by the "Bangalore torpedo"—a long tube, containing ammonal, which, when laid on entanglements and detonated, cleared a lane through them.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NEAR THE HINDENBURG LINE

Before Bullecourt's final capture, 'which was effected by London and West Riding Territorial troops, the Australians had stubbornly maintained themselves for a gruelling fortnight in front of the village. This illustration shows "diggers," on May 8th, manning a railway embankment parallel with the Hindenburg Line. The sections of the supposedly impregnable Line which fell to us in the Arras battle were the first to be taken.

The operation had been carefully rehearsed. Special attention had been taken to ensure supply and reinforcement. In short, preparations were on sound lines, though the plan was too complicated. There were, however, faults in execution.

On the extreme right, the 5th Australian Brigade was beaten back at once, and, except for a few detachments, took no further serious part in the fighting. On its left, Gellibrand's 6th Brigade fought a Homeric battle. The story of the initiative and bold leadership of its young officers will stir the pulses of Australians down the ages.

Unfortunately, this attack did not cover the whole front allotted to the division, the intention apparently being to complete the task by bombing to the left on reaching the first objective. Consequently, there was a big gap between the Australian left and the right of the 62nd, from which the Germans were able to take all the assaults of the latter in enfilade, and to prevent it from gaining any serious success.

Small parties from both divisions managed to establish themselves far forward; but, isolated and unsupported, they were eventually driven back or destroyed. The only real success of the day was the permanent lodgment effected by the 6th Brigade.

For the next fortnight, repeated attempts were made to extend this success: the 1st and 5th Australian Divisions, and the 7th, 58th, and 62nd British Divisions being employed. All played a fine part; but only on the 15th, after the way had been well prepared for them by the 7th, did the 58th and 62nd succeed in capturing the whole village of Bullecourt. Losses in these operations were very heavy, amounting, in the Anzac Corps alone, to over 10,000 in the two battles. At the end of May the fighting died down along the whole front.

An Unwelcome Birthday Greeting

The 9th April was Ludendorff's birthday; and the greeting from Arras hit him heavily. "The situation was extremely critical and might have had far-reaching and serious consequences if the enemy had pushed further forward. But the British contented themselves with their great success and did not continue the attack, at least not on the 9th April.... I had looked to the expected offensive with confidence, and was now deeply depressed.... The battle of Arras was a bad beginning for the decisive strategy of the year....

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HUSH!
Near Arras, on March 24th, 1917, a raiding party waits in a sap for the signal to advance. On this occasion the Official Photographer followed them. Unfortunately, a few moments later a shell fell short, killing seven men.

A day like April 9th threw all calculations to the winds." [1]

Meanwhile, in spite of the marked inferiority of its machines, our air force maintained the offensive throughout the battle—but at the cost of very heavy casualties. The new "Bristol Fighter," on which great hopes were pinned, failed at first to justify expectations. Of a formation of six, four were destroyed in a fight with five "Albatrosses" led by von Richthofen, without loss to the Germans.

At once there was great rejoicing among the German pilots: the much-belauded newcomer contained no serious threat. Fortunately they were wrong. The Bristol, owing to the critical nature of the air situation, had been brought into action too early, before its technical and tactical qualities had been fully developed. When a few defects had been remedied, and pilots had learnt to handle the machine, it proved equal to the best; and it rendered staunch service right up to the Armistice.

To fight in inferior aircraft is a disheartening business. The German, uncomfortably placed, could open his throttle and clear off. The British pilot, similarly situated, had to stand and fight. Nevertheless, and in spite of the monotonous tale of losses, the spirit of our airmen was never quenched, their morale never lowered.

The R.N.A.S. at Arras

The Royal Naval Air Service at this time possessed the best of our machines—"Spads" and "Sopwith Pups"; and it rendered invaluable assistance at Arras. Here is an account of a day in the life of a naval pilot. Ft.-Lieut. J. S. T. Fall, when escorting bombers, had become separated from his formation:

"When the B.E.'s were attacked at Cambrai, I attacked a H.A. head-on at about 8,000 feet. I saw many tracers go into his engine. As we closed on one another, I half looped to one side of him, and then the H.A. dived with a large trail of blue smoke. I dived after him down to about 400 feet and fired about 50 rounds, when he went down absolutely out of control. . . .

"I was immediately attacked by 3 more Albatrosses, which drove me down to about 200 feet. We were at one another whenever possible, when at last I got into a good position and attacked one from above. . . . I closed, turning in behind him. . . . The H.A. then heeled over and spun to the ground. The other two machines cleared off. . . .

"I decided to fly home at about that height (200 feet). . . . After flying west for about 5 minutes I was again attacked by a Halberstadt single-seater; and, as

[1] *My War Memories* (E. Ludendorff).

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT THE DOUBLE
The raiding party gets clear of the sap and makes for the German trenches. These saps—for the benefit of anyone who may have forgotten—were galleries dug at right-angles to the front-line trenches, and extending as far into No Man's Land as the sappers could get without being detected. This shortened considerably the amount of open country which a raiding party had to cross, but the fly in the ointment was that the raiders had, of course, to emerge one by one. The men in these pictures belong to the 10th Scottish Rifles.

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he closed on me, I rocked my machine till he was within 50 yards. I then side-slipped over him and fired a short burst at him. He seemed to clear off, and then attacked me again; these operations were repeated several times, with a slight variation in the way I looped over him, until . . . when he was about 150 yards behind me, I looped straight over him and, coming out of the loop, I dived at him and fired a good long burst. . . . He immediately dived straight into the ground. . . .

"I then went over German trenches filled with soldiers, and was fired at by machine-guns, rifles, and small field guns, in and out of range. . . . My machine was badly shot about."[1]

Richthofen—Ace of the Air

Over this sector of the front the struggle for air supremacy was now being waged with a bitter ferocity that few could have foreseen in the early days of the War. On the German side, the star of the redoubtable and nationally-idolised Baron Manfred von Richthofen was still in the ascendant. In his blood-red Fokker triplane he was shooting down British machines at an average rate of one a day; his fiftieth victim had already fallen under the muzzles of his Spandau guns, while several members of his mobile *Jagdstaffel*, the notorious Richthofen Circus, inspired by their leader's brilliant example, had already laid the foundations of the big scores they were to pile up before they followed him to Valhalla. Another year, however, was to pass before that time came, a fateful year, with air supremacy hanging in the balance. Meanwhile, stories of Richthofen's exploits, headlined in the German newspapers, did more to uphold the morale of the people at home than any success on the ground. Losses on land and sea were carefully camouflaged behind the stirring deeds of the Red Knight, and passed unnoticed by the masses. Hindenburg said that this one man was worth thirty thousand bayonets to the German cause, and that may have been no exaggeration.

It should not be overlooked, however, that much of his success was due to advantageous conditions that were denied our airmen. We had adopted a policy of relentless aggression, and under such superb fighters and leaders as Bishop, McCudden, Ball, and Rhys Davids—to name only a few—Numbers 40, 56, and 60 Squadrons were pushing far into hostile air, seeking and giving

[1] H. A. Jones, *The War in the Air*, iii, p. 347.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

COLLECTING SNOW

During the hard winter of 1917, when all wells, ponds, etc., were frozen, the R.E. had to resort to collecting snow for cooking purposes. However, this eliminated the danger of using wells which the enemy might have poisoned.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

VICTORIOUS

As the gentleman on the left is anxious to point out, this is a captured German trench in which the group in the foreground has condescended to be photographed. The picture was taken at Serre, during the Ancre operations of March, 1917. This village had figured fairly prominently in the news since the beginning of the year. The Germans occupied a British post on January 13th, after which constant affrays took place until they abandoned Serre and other villages on February 25th.

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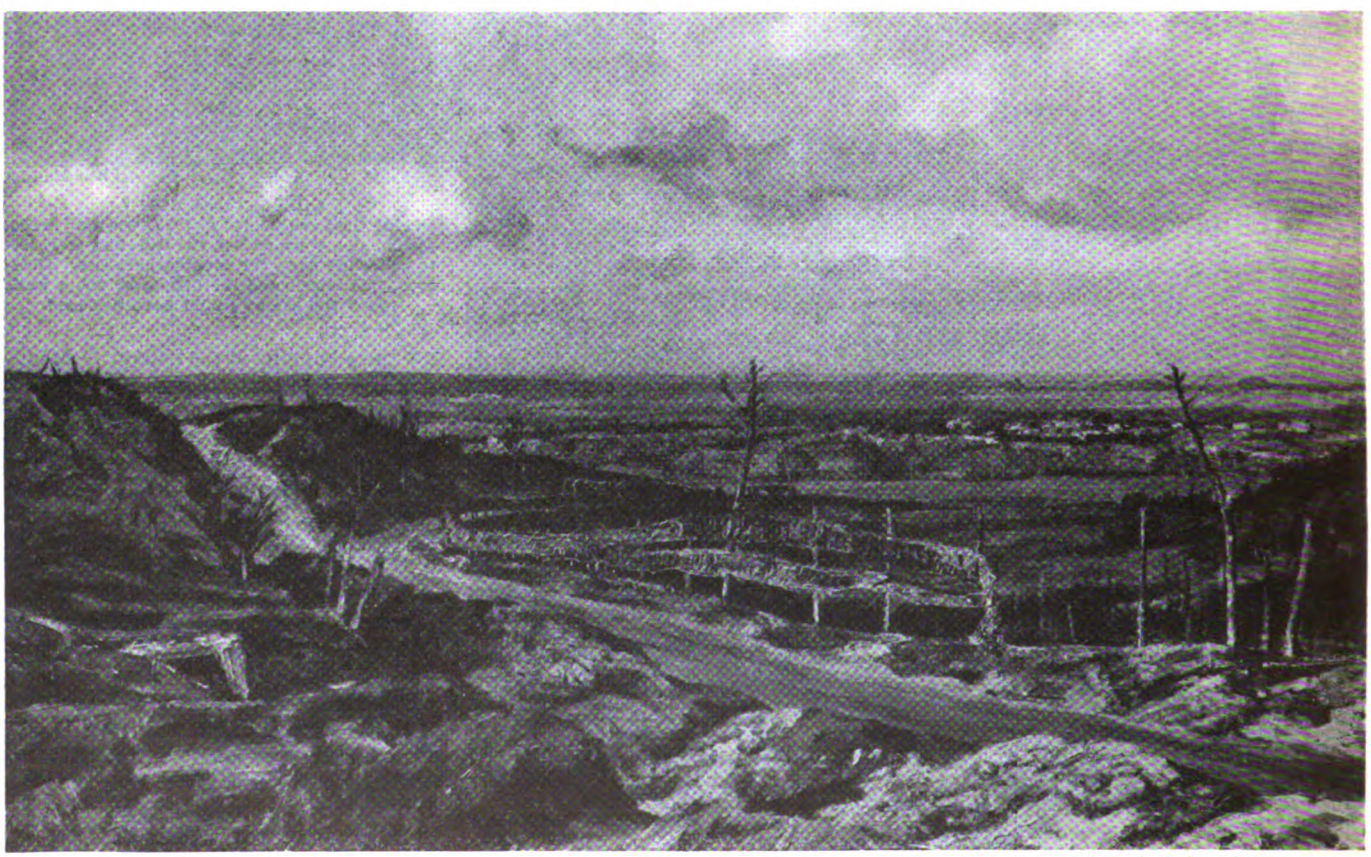
battle to the enemy over his own ground. The advantage to the enemy of this one factor alone was enormous, for it meant that if a British machine was damaged it was compelled to land on the wrong side of the lines ; a German pilot, hit during the same combat, could land in his own country, perhaps on his own aerodrome, for such was the spirit of our men that they pushed home their attacks as far as Douai, which for a long time was Richthofen's headquarters. As a matter of fact Richthofen was actually shot down on two occasions, but he was soon able to take the air again. A British pilot would, of course, have been made prisoner. Then again, the prevailing wind was in the teeth of our pilots as they flew home after raids into hostile country. These points should not be overlooked when considering our warfare in general and the prowess of the Richthofen *Jagdstaffel* in particular.

It is a curious fact, due possibly to the enormous amount of publicity which has been given to Richthofen both in his own country and in this, that few people are aware that No. 56 Squadron, R.F.C., eclipsed the Richthofen record, both in the number of machines shot down, and for the number shot down in any one month. The British Higher Command—and, for that matter, the Government—was opposed to the adulation of one particular man, or one particular unit, while others were doing their own jobs, no doubt just as well, but in less spectacular circumstances. War, they declared, was an impersonal business, and to point to certain airmen as successful warriors was an unfair gesture to the unquestionable valour of the infantry, the artillery, and other ground troops. For this reason the British Aces were never fêted as were those of other nations.

Such a policy might even have caused heart-burning within the air service itself. All were brave. All did their duty, so why make distinctions ? Take the position of an observer, or an air-gunner, often a private soldier chosen from the ranks. What chance had he of becoming an Ace ? In short, such a designation was fundamentally unsound, because it extended a false importance to one branch of the service at the expense of others. It is now admitted that the morale of bomber pilots of other countries did actually suffer by this policy of turning the limelight on individuals ; not unnaturally they sought the publicity which surrounded the Ace pilots, and when their applications for transfer to scout squadrons were refused, they lost heart and became disgruntled.

To return to Richthofen. Apart from all personal considerations, it cannot be overlooked that his operations made things very difficult for us, particularly for our artillery-spotters, reconnaissance and photographic aeroplanes, and for the machines that were detailed to bomb back areas in order to hamper the enemy in his advancement of reinforcements, both men and material. They all worked under great difficulty and suffered appalling losses. Their morale remained unimpaired, however, and, with the arrival of new pilots, and new types of machines from home, they carried on their work with the grim determination that in the end made them masters of the sky.



From a painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"THE LENS—ARRAS ROAD"

Detail of a painting by Sir Herbert Hughes-Stanton, R.A. Before the War this artist, who was himself the son of a painter, became a frequent exhibitor of landscapes at the chief British galleries, while his works were added to the collections of most of the principal European cities. His War picture of the Lens—Arras road is a good example of his work, and, from another point of view, a very fair representation of the Vimy landscape. The sub-title reads "Looking on to Vimy village, Lens, and Montigny."

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CHAPTER LIV

ARRAS AND VIMY REVISITED

Few parts of the old British line in France are of more interest to ex-Servicemen than the country around Arras. There was fighting in plenty on this part of the front, but when we look back, the Arras—Vimy sector is not associated in our minds with any tragic battles such as the Somme or Passchendaele. It was instead the scene of one of our most successful enterprises, the storming of the Vimy Ridge. Nevertheless, there was a deal of hard fighting in the country around Arras, and thousands of men, at one time or another, served thereabouts. In the following chapter an ex-Serviceman tells of a recent visit paid to this region, a terrain which for him holds many memories.

A BRITISH ex-Serviceman who revisited the town of Arras some ten years ago, expressed the opinion that it was a vile spot, and could find no single extenuating feature to place to its credit. He castigated its citizens roundly, asserting that they appeared one and all to exist for the sole purpose of making profit at the expense of the returning Britisher, and classed them collectively as a band of depraved robbers.

A Bad Impression

How true this may have been at the date mentioned, it is not for another to say; but a reference which accompanied the stricture seems to throw not a little light upon the cause of the poor impression collected by that visitor, and may similarly explain, up to a point, how a more recent pilgrim was able to bring away a reminiscence altogether different.

Pilgrim No. 1, reduced to his last few-score francs, sought shelter under the roof of Arras's most thieving innkeeper, spent a dreadful night in the company of numerous small and cannibalistic bedfellows, and was presented, on leaving, with a bill out of all proportion to the service rendered. In his various peregrinations through the town he appears to have encountered all the worst features in sequence—and none of the better ones. And he came away, as indicated above, with hate and loathing in his heart.

Now that is the sort of thing that may happen to any of us, anywhere and at any time; and it is most unfortunate from every point of view. When it persists, as it sometimes does, over two or more further visits, then one is justly entitled to assume that the impression which one brings away is a fair and correct one—provided always that there is no suspicion of bias, such as an unfavourable recollection of an earlier sojourn. . . . Which really brings us to what we were about to say.

Pilgrim No. 2 arrived in the town of Arras, for the second time in his life, in the evening of a late and extremely hot summer's day. He arrived by road in lonely state, crashing bewilderingly into the hustle and bustle of the teeming main street straight from the solitude of the smooth highway leading in from Nœux-les-Mines and Souchez.

The whole population of the town appeared to be massed in the one narrow thoroughfare. Several hundred motor-cars moved at alarming speed, in two uninterrupted lines, up and down its considerable length, while on the pavements men, women, and children, crowding in front of the shop-windows, made such progress along the street as was humanly possible—and no more.

In a Glow of Contentment

In all essential respects, such manifestations as these are to be found in a host of similar towns on the Continent to-day; but to the new arrival in this particular instance there was something about them which was distinctive. There is no doubt that a fortuitous jarring note, such as a collision with one of the multitudinous vehicles rushing dangerously past, or an ill-humoured altercation with one of the numerous white-capped minions of the law standing in peril of their lives between the flow of traffic at the various cross-roads, would have made a vast difference to the lasting impression at this stage crystallising in the subconscious mind of the pilgrim; but there was no such note, and the traveller that same night laid his head to rest upon the snowy whiteness of a downy yet reasonably inexpensive pillow with a pleasant glow of perfect contentment. It is amazing what a moderately-priced half-bottle can do—if one is lucky enough to hit upon a kindly vintage.

But it is not by any means solely due to gastronomic after-effects that we conceive a liking or a disliking for a place, whether it be a city or a mere hamlet. Much more than that enters into the question, and even if one can and does feed well in Arras—pronounce it "Arrass," with the stress on the second syllable, if you wish to pass as a French scholar; not "Arrah," as so many English people wrongly imagine to be correct—it is the town itself, and its present-day inhabitants, which will attract or repel, according to the mood of the visitor.

Pilgrim No. 2 found both singularly attractive on this his first post-war return. It may be that he was lucky; but as a second visit was to bear out the first, this does not appear to have been the explanation. Mind you, he was not very easy to please. Places like Albert had appalled him with their meretricious shallowness. He arrived in Arras prepared to be severely critical, yet within an hour or two was marvelling how it could be that nothing in the town had so far given him the slightest ground for complaint.

If the truth be known, he had come under the spell of the perfectly-proportioned spire of St. Jean Baptiste—seen above the house-tops, from the south-eastern side, as the setting sun played upon it from beyond Doullens; and this was before he saw the cathedral or the town hall.

The Grand' Place, Arras

In his wanderings to stretch his legs, cramped from his drive, before dinner, he found himself trying to picture the town as he had remembered it in 1916–17; and not until he halted in the cobbled Grand' Place, and saw for the first time the traces of the War's heavy hand stretching almost continuously down its southern side in the shell-spattered and still-crumbled stone arches, was he in any way successful. Even here, the impression he formed was that of an old town which had been damaged in places only, instead of, as so frequently, that of a new one which here

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

ARRAS : THE *PLACE DE LA GARE*

Although, as an earlier illustration has shown, the station buildings themselves came comparatively well out of the 1917 bombardment of Arras, the square and surrounding regions were severely damaged. This photograph of wrecked houses in the *place*—one still brightly offering " rooms for travellers "—was taken on May 26th, 1917.

and there still bore traces of a former existence.

Among the inhabitants also there was that solidity of appearance which associated them with the previous life of the town, even if, as he surmised more than once in his stroll, many of them were undoubtedly newcomers.

In one narrow street not far from the Hôtel de Ville, he paused in front of a cutler's window to admire an extraordinary assortment of wares, ranging from safety-razors, at one end of the scale, to deer-stalking rifles at the other. Making a note of the shop for future reference, he passed on ; but the next night, requiring a stick of shaving-soap, he returned and went in, only to find that the brand of soap he wanted was not stocked.

Normally the visit would have ended at that, but not so in this instance. The cutler, who himself came forward to serve the Englishman, started the ball rolling with some remark that led to a question concerning a certain make of razor. This was at about 7 p.m. At 7.45, the hinged front of the shop had been wheeled back into the shop, door-fashion, and Pilgrim No. 2 was having explained to him at great length the inner mechanism of each of the innumerable electric and clockwork safety-razors which festooned the various shelves. Time was of no moment ; whenever he made a move to take his departure he was detained, another ingenious device was lifted from its support, and another demonstration was begun.

At Peace with a Place . . .

When, finally, he tore himself away, he bent his steps toward his hotel with his head in a whirl, yet withal the richer, by that form of mild contentment which comes with the making of what deserves a better name than that of just a fresh acquaintance. He felt that if, at any future date, it should fall to him to be in Arras again, and in need of assistance—quite apart from a possible shortage of shaving-soap—he would have but to wander up the rue St. Géry and take a narrow street bearing off to the right near the town hall, to have all his troubles taken from him. And that is the sort of feeling which makes one at peace with a place —and a people. . . .

An English-speaking visitor arriving in Arras to-day is taken for granted by the good Arrageois as being either on his or her way from Vimy, or on his or her road to that place. Little else, in their view, can qualify as sufficient motive for a pilgrimage to this part of France—apart from possible family ties which might conceivably justify a visit to one of the countless cemeteries.

In Arras, then, the word " battlefield " connotes Vimy, and it is easy to find the reason for this belief. It is the (now) old story that only in the neighbourhood of that hamlet are any tangible traces of the War of 1914–18 still

Photo : A. J. Insall.

THE *GARE* TO-DAY

The modern station is not particularly impressive, although in an endeavour to make it seem so the photographer has conscientiously taken his picture from an upper floor of an hotel in the square. Notice the two motor-coaches : this type of vehicle now operates—although not for sight-seeing purposes—over a wide area of the former battlefields, linking Arras with such towns as Bapaume.

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SOUTH OF ALBERT (2)

Then and Now

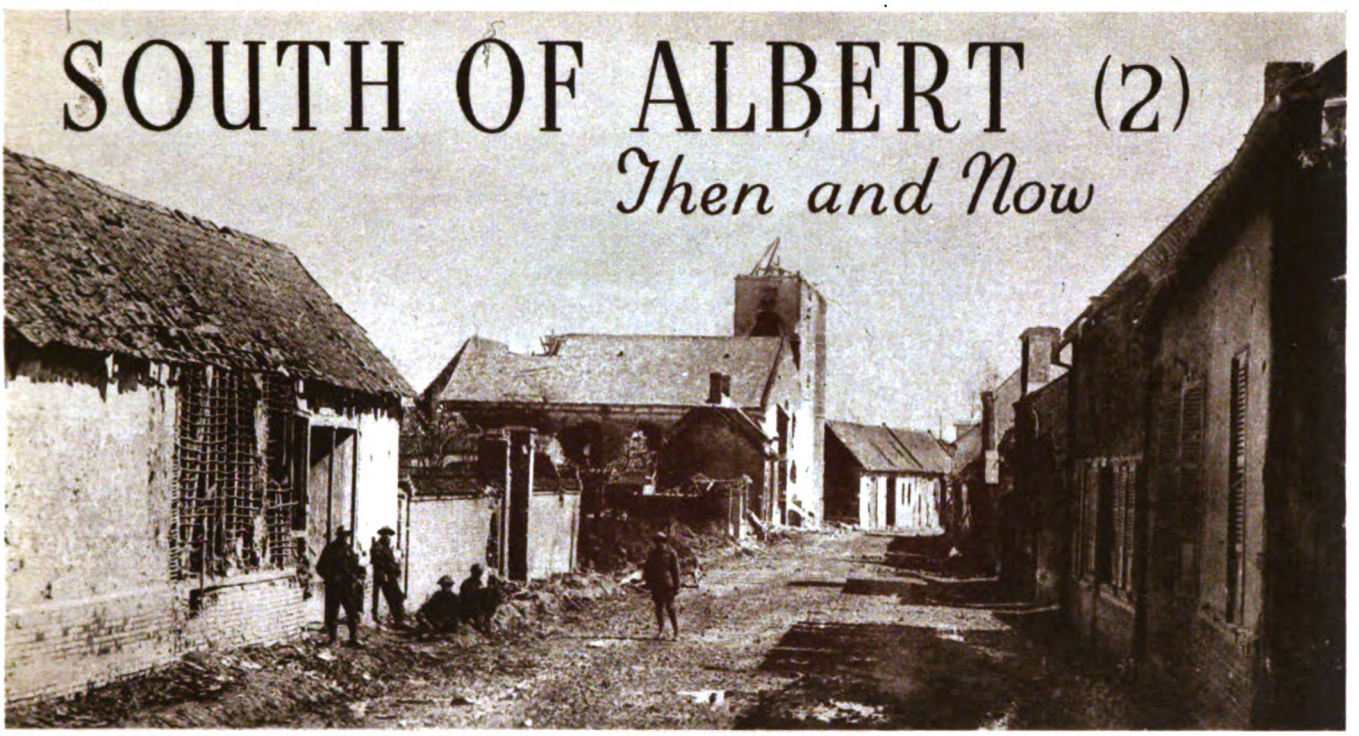

Photo: Imperial War Museum

BATTERED BUIRE

Once again confusion is likely to arise in the matter of name-reduplication, for two Buires lay in the southern part of the British area. One is situated on the railway and River Cologne, 5 km. east of Péronne; the other, which is that illustrated here, is to be found on the north bank of the Ancre, 6 km. south-west of Albert, between Dernancourt and Ribémont. The above photograph of the somewhat battered houses and church was taken on April 12th, 1918.

Photo: Keystone

BUIRE BUILT UP

Virtually the only period at which this small village came even remotely into the military picture was during the March Retreat and the continuation of the German push the following April. The VII Corps fell back on the west bank of the Ancre in this south-of-Albert sector on March 26th, and it was on approximately the same line that the fierce enemy thrust of April 5th was valiantly met by the weary and depleted troops.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

IN AUGUST, 1918

It may be remembered that the village of Framerville, 10 km. south of Bray-sur-Somme, formed the subject of two " Then and Now " pictures on page 583. Those illustrations showed scenes on the main road, which is part of the Albert–Montdidier route : here we give two views of the village church, which was used by the Germans in 1918 as a Red Cross hospital, but was shelled and destroyed by them after the Australians had recaptured the village on August 9th.

Photo: Keystone

IN DECEMBER, YEARS LATER

This contemporary photograph shows, amongst other things, the altered style of architecture in which the new church of Framerville has been built. The attack which regained us the village in August, 1918, is notable for the prominence of cavalry in the operations. The 8th Hussars of the 1st Cavalry Division took Méharicourt (south of Framerville) at the gallop, while the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, passing through our infantry, captured many prisoners and gained a considerable amount of ground. These three cavalry divisions were commanded by Majors-General Mullens, Pitman, and Harman respectively.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

CAPTURED TRANSPORT

Another War picture of Framerville, showing some of the transport which the 19th Battalion, A.I.F., found on recapturing the place. Framerville had fallen to the enemy on March 27th, 1918, during the March Retreat, or Second Battle of the Somme, as it is alternatively called. This was a black day in our retirement, for on it the enemy took, in addition to some eight or nine villages, the two towns of Albert and Montdidier. British, Australians, French, and Americans were all in action in an endeavour to stem the tide.

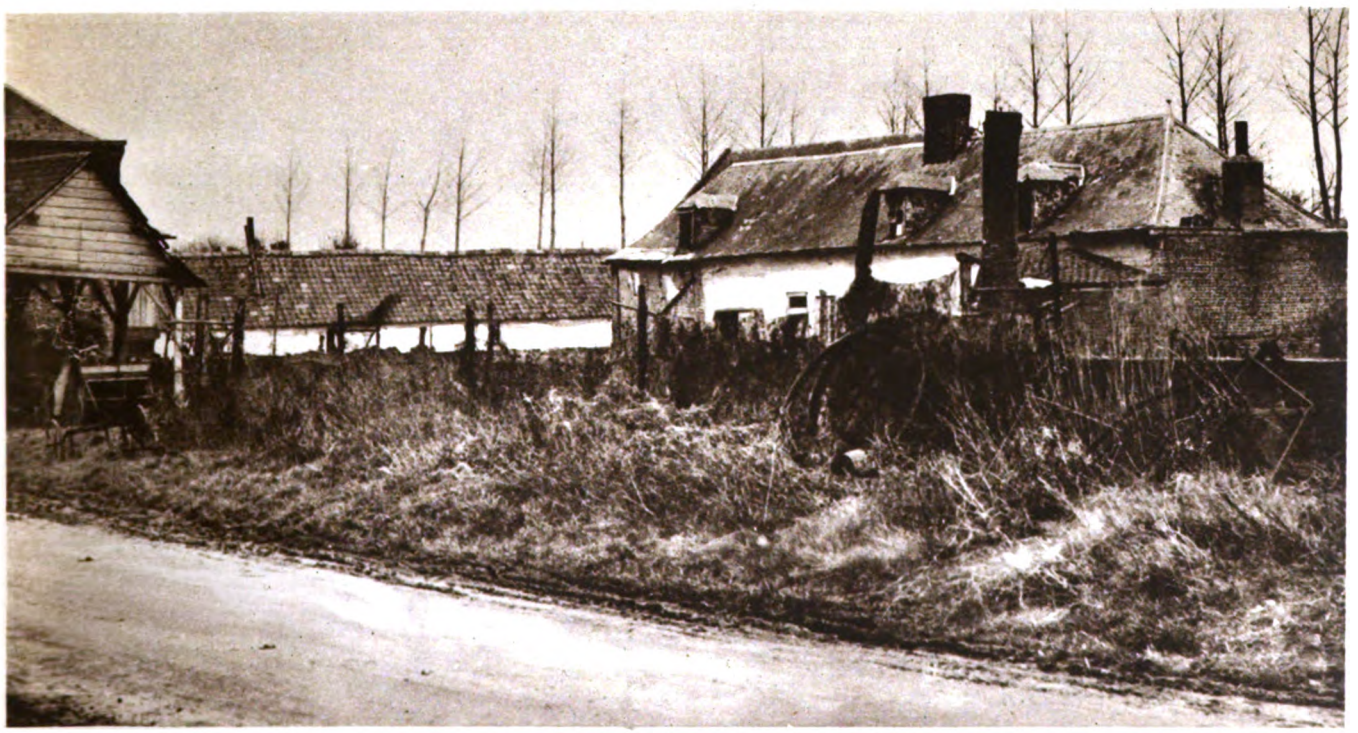

Photo: Keystone

RUSTIC SCENE

The loss of Framerville during the March Retreat was marked by one of those gallant efforts which have stamped the once maligned Fifth Army as some of the finest troops engaged in the War. The enemy had already gained possession of the village on Tuesday, March 26th, when part of two exhausted battalions of the 50th Division, newly placed under General Jackson, counter-attacked with such vigour that they retook most of the positions, and put a stop to any further enemy advance from this direction until the following day. There is no British cemetery at Framerville, but a number of British War dead lie in the communal cemetery.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A LONELY SCENE NEAR BUIRE

This village did not pass into German hands in 1918. Albert, of course, did so, and even Dernancourt, only 3 km. upstream; but south of that the line marking the limit of the enemy's April push crosses over the river, and shears away south to a point on the Somme near Sailly-le-Sec. Buire therefore saw no fighting in its own streets, although much nearby. The photograph reproduced above is a general view of an advanced battalion headquarters in a stone quarry close to the village.

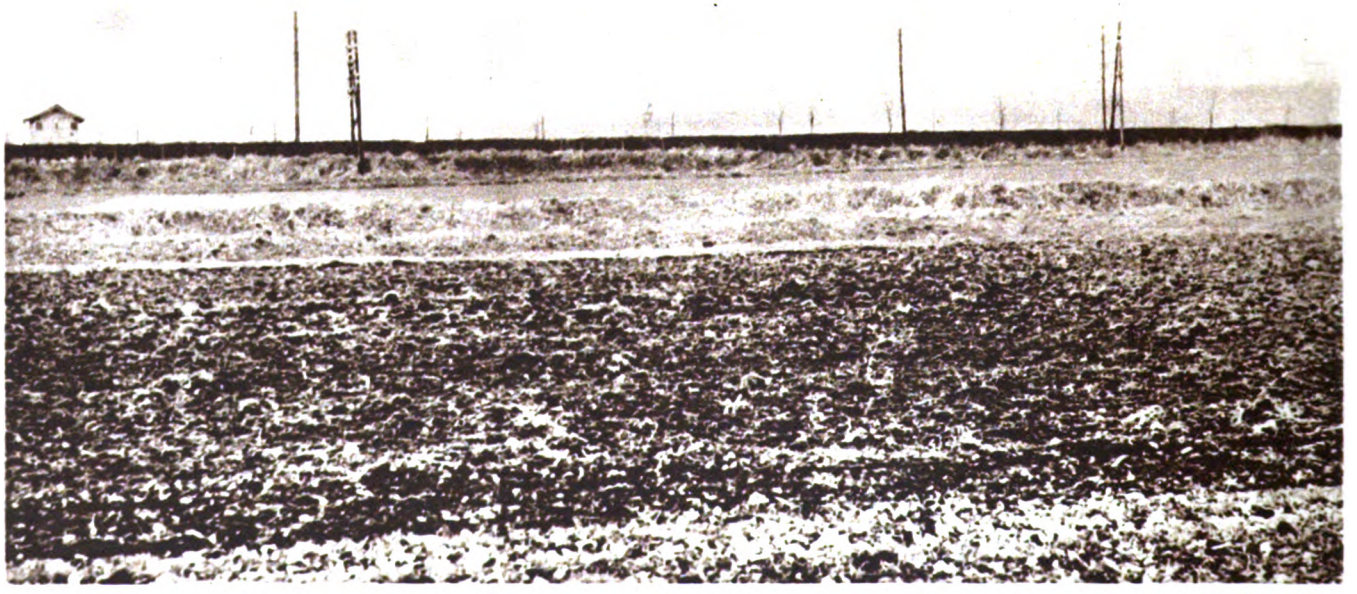

Photo: Keystone

A FIELD OF MANY MEMORIES

All the country about Buire-sur-Ancre is redolent with memories of the March Retreat. Gallant and bitter incidents were many, and perhaps no feature of those grim days was grimmer than the fighting which took place at Dernancourt, so near to Buire, on April 5th. Here four German divisions attacked two Australian brigades in the village, and yet the Australians contrived to hold almost all their positions. The whole front from Hébuterne, north of Albert, to Hangard, south of Villers-Bretonneux—more than twenty miles—was now held by a thin line of Australian and New Zealand troops, with one solitary Australian division in reserve.

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easily to be found. For the average visitor, this is true. For the other kind —well, for him it does not really matter whether it is true or not, for it is memory rather than sight that he relies upon. It will be a matter of complete indifference to him should level pasture or rolling ploughland confront him where he last saw the entrances to brigade headquarters dug-outs, or used to wade along a track almost knee-deep in mud, during that spring of '17—before the affair at Arras.

As to Vimy, there is a word of which our friend the enemy was passionately fond, and which does it justice as few others: it is "*Kolossal.*" Not quite as imposing in its bulk as our own memorial at Thiepval, the Vimy monument outdoes the latter by the grace of its tall form. It requires to be seen from afar, with the sun striking slantwise upon it, bathing it in a creamy iridescence, to be seen at its best. When one approaches to within hailing distance, having negotiated the steep hill which leads to its foot, one becomes painfully aware of the mechanical achievement involved in the erection of such a mighty piece of masonry, and loses the æsthetic effect that distance alone can create.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

OUTSIDE A DRESSING-STATION

A photograph taken at Blangy, on the eastern outskirts of Arras, April 14th, 1917. Note the chaplain ministering to the stretcher-cases on the left-hand side of the road—a sure sign of their seriousness. Indeed, it is likely that many a reader will recognise this place as concerning the fortunes of a relative or pal. On the right transport is passing.

A Critic of Vimy Memorial

Admitting the greatness of the event which the monument is there to perpetuate, the latter seems unnecessarily huge, and the thought is impressed upon one—how needless to attempt to equal an achievement by means of a memorial comparable in size! A simple stone, no larger than a headstone, is sufficient for Man's needs where the feat itself must live in memory for ever—or that is how it appears to one, at least, of those who have stood at the base of the Vimy memorial and thought about it. Our own Whitehall Cenotaph, if placed alongside, would be negligible; which to one way of thinking is all wrong, for here, at any rate, the part cannot well be greater than the whole.

Still, there it is, and there it will remain long after we and our children, and our children's children, have turned to dust; and, as an inspiring monument, it must take full marks. One may, perhaps, be permitted a certain amount of surprise that, in what is to-day an Anglo-Saxon Reservation, there should be tolerated notices in pidgin-English: "Do not park here. It is to turn" (if one recollects correctly). And why should it be *interdit* to take photographs within this reservation? Surely those who have troubled to journey so far should be entitled, if they desire, to take away with them some lasting souvenir of their visit?

No visit to Vimy would be complete without a descent into the maze of reconstructed, or preserved, deep trenches and dug-outs which honeycomb the slopes of the Ridge just as they did in 1917. Work is still pro-

Photo: A. J. Insall.

WHERE MANY PASSED AWAY

On the date of the War picture, (*top*) our line was echelonned astride the Scarpe. On the right we had reached a point slightly north-west of Monchy-le-Preux; on the left we had advanced somewhat further, to a point beyond Fampoux. Blangy was, therefore, prominent as an approach-point on the route up to the scene of activity. This view shows the main road.

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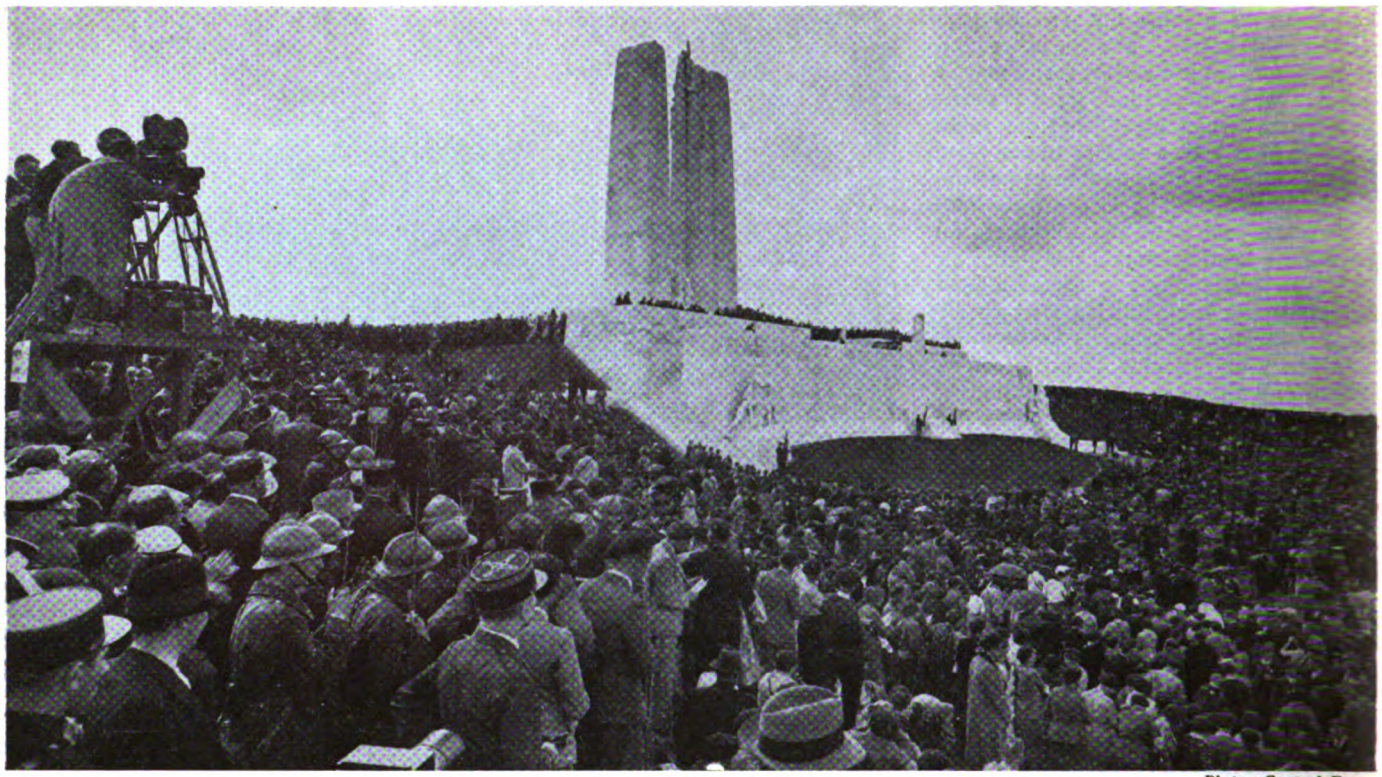

Photo : Central Press.

A HISTORIC UNVEILING

The unveiling of the Canadian War Memorial at Vimy will be remembered as one of the most important events in the brief reign of Edward VIII. This remarkable photograph shows a section of the tremendous crowd, much of it Canadian, which was present on that historic July 26th, 1936.

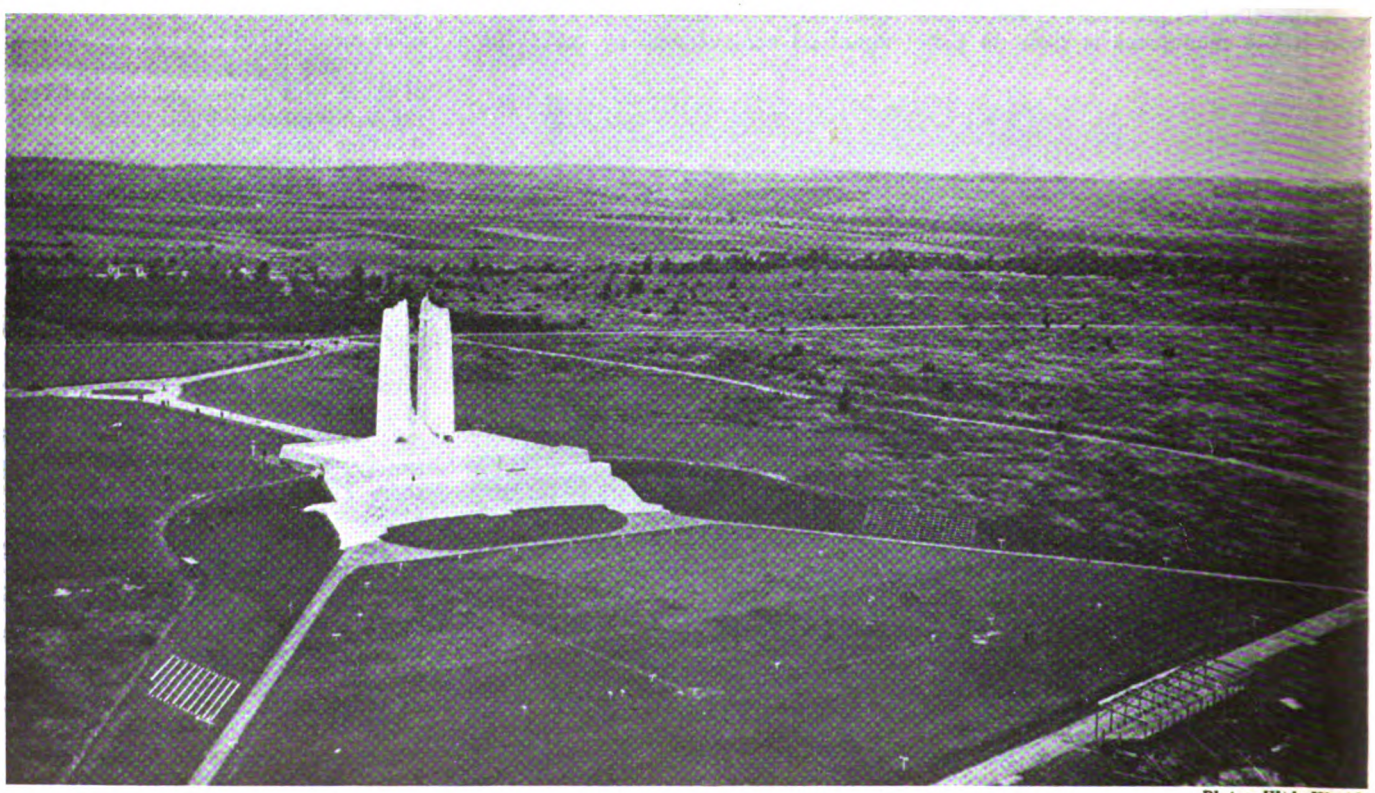

Photo : Wide World.

FROM THE AIR

A photograph of the memorial taken from an aeroplane on the eve of the unveiling. The numerous signboards in the foreground are temporary erections for the guidance of the pilgrims, of whom more than 8,000 came to the ceremony from Canada alone. This aerial view gives a good idea of the type of country.

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Photo : Central Press.

CANADA IN FRANCE

The exact site of the memorial is Hill 145, the highest point of Vimy Ridge ; and as the height of the monument itself is about 125 feet, the imposing effect can easily be imagined. This view shows the two great pylons symbolising the unity of purpose of France and Canada, the lone, tragic figure of Canada mourning, and the tomb over which she broods. On the outer side of the tomb is inscribed in Latin : "In memory of the 60,000 Canadians who in the years of Our Lord 1914-1918 gave their lives for their country while fighting overseas."

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ceeding with a view to throwing yet more of these burrows open to the post-war public, and concrete is used to prevent the newly-excavated workings from collapsing. Although the result falls short, as of course it must do, of the real thing as the ex-Serviceman knew it, it is the nearest possible approach to actuality.

Panorama from the Ridge

A wonderful panorama is to be had on a clear day from the top of the Ridge. The town of Lens lies to the north, spread out from left to right almost as far as the eye can see, and the smoke of the multitudinous factories and pit-head chimneys hangs like a pall across the middle distance, so that Lille has to be imagined rather than seen. It is easy to understand why the ownership of this high ground was so fiercely contested during the War years. And when one retires to the southern slope, it becomes difficult to see how a strongly-entrenched enemy was ever forced to withdraw from such a position.

It also appears somewhat strange that that same enemy never used the position for a really determined attempt at a break-through between Souchez and Arras. With the last-named place in his hands, there is no knowing what he might have achieved toward a revision of the map of Europe. As it was, the natural strength of the German positions about Vimy was perhaps partly the reason of our attack there in the spring of 1917. Realising that the foe would not relinquish these positions lightly, Haig decided to include them in his plan for the operations designed to consummate the gains made in the Battles of the Somme.

By so doing he reckoned to pin down a considerable enemy force, knowing full well that the Germans would actively resist any attempt to wrest this commanding ground from them; and the essence of the Battle of Arras (April, 1917) was to strike at the salient between the Scarpe and the Ancre, and at the same time to prevent the withdrawal, from any part of the front, of enemy reserves designed to reinforce the line elsewhere.

The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line upset part of Haig's plan, by enabling the enemy to avoid having some of his troops cut off by the converging attacks which it was intended to deliver on the positions he evacuated. It meant in addition, that the Fifth Army would now have to move forward to fresh positions, instead of attacking from the line of the Ancre as had been arranged.

Although the Battle of Arras first brought the limelight to bear upon this sector of the British front, it must not be imagined that quietness had hitherto been its keynote. Troops who came here from time to time during 1915 and 1916 (we took over the area from the French towards the end of the former year) may have been told that they were in a peaceful sector, but soon learned exactly what that meant.

Photo: Sport & General.

THE BREAKING OF THE SWORD

An impressive "angle" study of one of the two sculpture groups flanking the memorial. The subject here is the "Breaking of the Sword," while that of the companion group at the other end of the base is the "Sympathy of the Canadians for the Helpless." Round the two pylons are 20 sculptured figures each 12 feet high. The exceptionally fine standard of sculpture is here well revealed.

Where Fighting was "Not Done"

Not that there were never any peaceful parts of the line. For a considerable length of time, troops in front of Bar-le-Duc used to spend most of their daylight hours seated on the parapets of their trenches grooming themselves or writing their letters home, in full view of the opposing "belligerents," and their artillery kept up appearances by firing a predetermined number of rounds, at a predetermined time, into predetermined wide open spaces.

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In many senses it was an excellent arrangement, because the Western Front was really too long for the available troops. It had to extend all the way from Nieuport to Switzerland, for geographical reasons if for no other. So, from time to time, according to the mood of the men present, certain stretches of line became "peaceful," and the rival parties tacitly agreed to mind each his own affairs—to live and let live.

It was thus when, in the late summer of 1915, we extended our front southwards to a point below the River Somme. Our ingoing troops opposite Villers-Bretonneux were amazed to find the trenches almost devoid of cover, and "trenches" in name only. Here and there, in fact, there was no front trench at all; and, after incredulously wandering for some distance along a ditch, screened from the enemy as to the legs only, the newcomers emerged into open ground with the whole of No Man's Land at their feet, and a section of the German Army reclining in various attitudes of repose at about the length of a football-field away from them.

Of course, this sort of thing could not be allowed to continue, and the necessary steps were taken to institute a state of war with the minimum delay—much to the inconvenience of all concerned; the result being that within less than a week we were organising trench-raids and destructive artillery shoots at intervals so short that the enemy must have thought we revelled in them.

Those Monotonous Raids

In the Arras sector, quite as much as in any other part of the British line on the Western Front, trench raids were of almost monotonous frequency. In truth, scarcely a night went by without some operation being staged in No Man's Land.

The object, as a rule, was the identification of opposing units by means of one or more prisoners, or the interruption of enemy work on damaged wire, together with the equally important aim of acquiring moral ascendancy over the foe by securing and maintaining the initiative over him. But not all the raids took place by night. Many were conducted in daylight, and some were little short of minor offensives.

One such, organised on the 28th June, 1916, at Wailly, to the south of Arras, was a divisional affair, and took place at six separate points. Parties drawn from six units conducted the raid, and the most detailed preparation was made. Under the ægis of the Royal Engineers, gas and smoke were projected from our front-line trenches over a two-mile sector, although at the moment of discharge one of those irritating and all-too-frequent changes of wind resulted in the operation being only partly successful.

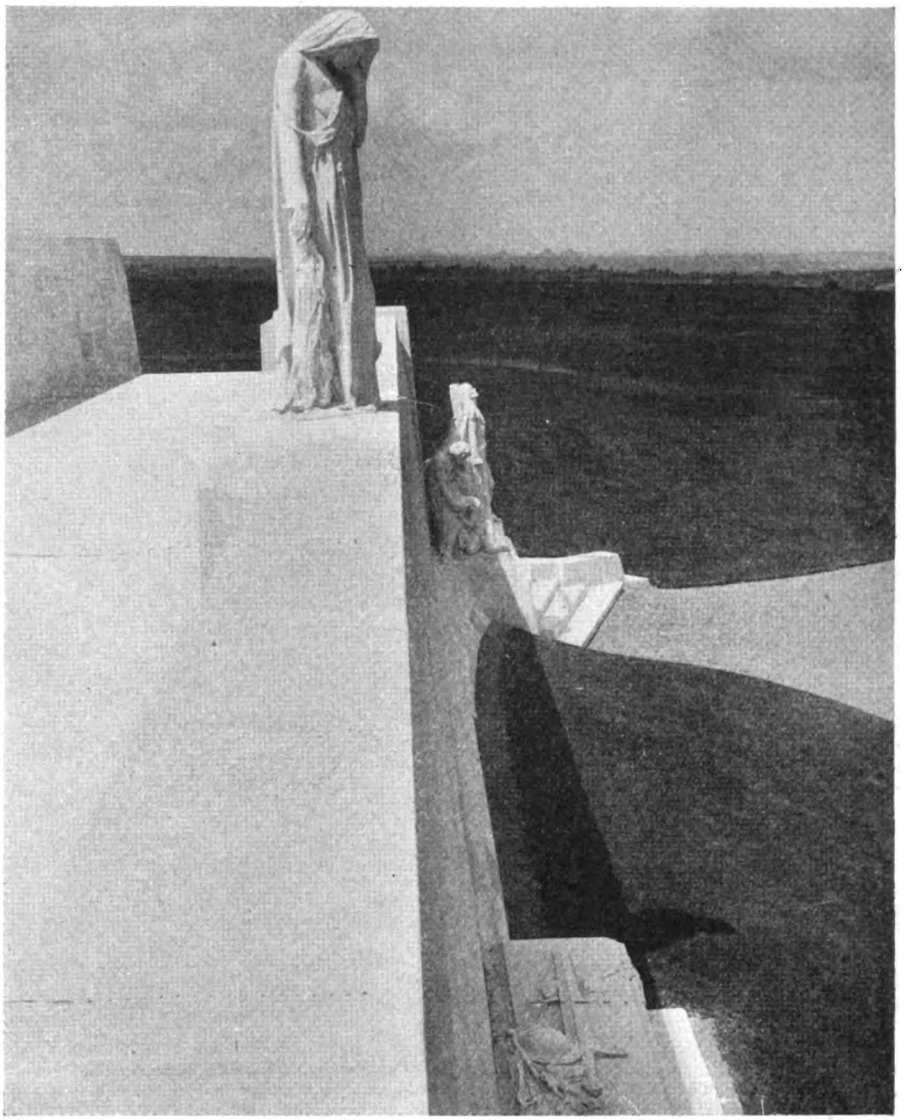

Photo: Keystone.

CANADA WEEPS

Another view of the Mourning Canada shown in the full-page picture on page 887. This view shows also a part of the Memorial Park, still in its War guise. The territory which Canadian troops here won on April 12th, 1917, nevermore to lose, was later conceded to them in perpetuity by the French Government. While the monument commemorates all Canada's fallen, it also pays specific honour to her 11,285 missing, whose names are graven on the panels.

Robbed of the protection which they would have had, under favourable conditions, from the gas and smoke, the raiding-parties came under heavy machine-gun fire as soon as they left their trenches, and suffered severe losses. In spite of this handicap, however, the enemy lines were entered at more than one place. In the case of the most successful party—that drawn from the Liverpool Rifles—3 officers and 72 men went across at 5.30 p.m., supported by well-directed covering fire from their own lines, and successfully penetrated the enemy's front-line trench.

This trench they proceeded to clear thoroughly, bombing the dug-outs, and taking possession of one prisoner, one trench mortar, and one machine gun. The party suffered three fatal casualties, and 24 of its members received wounds. As its bayonet-men worked from traverse to traverse along the German trench, they used the quaint challenge: "How's your father?" to which the correct reply was: "Merry and bright!" Any other answer, however truthful, reaped its own reward.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A POT-HOLE IN THE ROAD

This impressive photograph—with, for once, some of the rightful human element visible—shows the village of Bohain, and was taken within a month of the Armistice. Bohain lies midway between St. Quentin and Le Cateau, and therefore, so far as British troops were concerned, belongs exclusively to the Retreat from Mons and the final advance. Such, indeed, is the explanation of the feminine note in the photograph, for the Germans seldom evicted the civil population from the places which remained behind their lines during most of the War. It was just north of Bohain that the Battle of Le Cateau was fought.

By the Banks of the Crinchon

To-day it seems incredible, as one passes alongside the little Crinchon, a stream less than half the width of the Scarpe, that such happenings ever took place here. All is so utterly peaceful. The vegetation has completely re-asserted its sovereignty over the once disturbed soil, and all around the atmosphere is of another world, another life which knows nothing of what went on in that same place barely twenty years back.

Few of the local inhabitants have any territorial or sentimental ties with the period of the War to fasten their affections to the district; the majority came here in the late '20's; and if their parents formerly lived here, they, the sons and daughters, were then too young to remember much about it now, while the parents themselves, should they dwell here again to-day, have rather tired of telling what they saw, and heard, and experienced, and have taken the easy course of forgetfulness. It is the same here, you see, as on any other part of the former Western Front.

In a certain hostelry in Arras, not so very long ago, an ex-Air Force Englishman, who knew enough of the language to follow it, one evening became vastly interested in a conversation between the proprietor of the establishment and a senior French Air Service officer. It appeared that the latter, who had arrived during dinner by car, was on a visit of inspection to certain embryo air stations in the immediate vicinity of the town.

There was talk of sundry meetings with local potentates, beginning with a duty call upon the Mayor the following morning; and the hotel-proprietor, impressed by the importance of the occasion, drew his visitor down, after dinner, to a bottle of venerable liqueur brandy, close to where our ex-Air Force Englishman was installed with a humble cup of black coffee.

The conversation began, as might have been expected, along general lines, touching the times of the various appointments which were to be kept during the visitor's stay, and then, by degrees, was steered into those channels which would sooner or later have to be explored by a fond parent anxious to gratify a son's urgent desire to become a member of his country's air force. The son, so the hotel-proprietor explained, was not yet aged fifteen, yet his mind was so firmly made up that he

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(papa) saw no possibility of its being changed.

How to Join the French Air Force

Was he—did the other considerwise in furthering the lad's ambition? Was the life really what one heard it to be? And were there any useful *tuyaux* (tips) the knowledge of which might ease the young man's entry into the *Service Aérien*? The French Air Service officer, with never a glance toward the eavesdropping Englishman, settled himself in his leather tub-chair and proceeded to tell his enquirer exactly what he should do in order to add an additional pilot to France's growing corps of military aviators.

There were, indeed, several useful *tuyaux* which it would be well to bear in mind when approaching the Powers That Be of France's air organisation, though the advice was not of such general interest that we need retail it here. Suffice it that certain names were alluded to, in much the same way that you or I might say: "Approach So-and-So"; and it is to be hoped that when the time came the officials concerned were still in office, for apparently they were capable of working almost any desired miracle. . . .

It being by now agreed that the son's emergence as a fully-fledged flying officer was only a question of time, the temporary friend at Court suddenly poured a douche of cold water upon his host's head by remarking, quite unthinkingly, that, in general, the material recruited from this particular region was of a lower standard than that obtained from certain other provinces (among which, one gathered from his accent, he included the various departments adjacent to the Pyrenees).

Perhaps the French officer was right; it must at all events be conceded that he should have been in a position to know. But to his British listener, for no logical reason, the statement sounded positively profane.

A Vision of 1916

Closing his eyes, he let his mind run back to an evening in the late spring of 1916. He saw stretched out before him the broad expanse of Savy aerodrome, surrounded by the softly-billowing, tawny canvas Bessonneau aeroplane hangars, outside which stood several oil-stained biplanes waiting to be put away for the night. From where he sat, in the dream-picture now before him, at one of those collapsible tables which did duty for an adjutant's desk, he could see anyone approaching the

Photo: Keystone.

SAFE TO CYCLE ON

Bohain was captured by the 6th Division on October 9th, 1918, and was the first intact townlet to be taken by the Fourth Army, its civil population numbering at the time about 4,000. It lies at the crossing of two main roads and the junction of several minor ones, and before the enemy left he blew mines, such as that shown opposite, at every entrance to the place. He also rendered the railway as unsafe as possible with delay-action mines. At this period the junction of the French and British Armies lay just south of Bohain.

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orderly room of No. 11 (Fighting) Squadron, and the door had purposely been left open on this particular evening so that the view across the arrival-platform, so to speak, should be unimpeded.

An aeroplane engine was being run up at the far end of the farther line of sheds, and, as the picture crystallised in the ex-adjutant's memory, it slowed down, spluttered once or twice, and stopped. He heard the metallic tinkle of the last pair of exhaust-valves, as they fell home on their seats at the engine's final revolution, and caught the pilot's announcement to the mechanic—"Switch is off, Grant!" as his own voice struck his ear, saying to someone seated close to him by the stove: "If they don't turn up in another five minutes, I vote we go down to the Mess."

And just then there appeared a group of three (or was it four?) khaki-clad figures hurrying across the cinders outside the squadron office, carrying the haversacks of newly-posted flying personnel. The next thing he heard was himself and his companion welcoming the newcomers to their new unit, followed by an elaborately-prepared cross-examination as to experience, social status, and a score of other similar matters, the approach to which would, without some exercise of subtlety, have been fraught with insurmountable difficulties.

As it was, all went according to plan, and by the end of the first round of cigarettes, without any member of the group being aware of the reasons leading up to it, the respective destination of each one had been decided. "Will you, then, go to 'C' Flight—and you to 'A'? We will take you down and introduce you—and *you*, you will have to come to 'B.' Is that all right from your point of view?"

Enter Captain Ball

Of course it was. They were all of them green, as far as the squadron was concerned, and none of them had any wishes in the matter. They were all rather tired and hungry, and their great preoccupation was to get settled for the night before it grew too dark for them to pick out their landmarks in a village whose houses had little whereby to differentiate them from their neighbours.

And so the little party broke up, the squadron orderly room closed its door (that a pleasant warmth might greet the orderly officer when he

Photo: G. T. Watson.

STILL AS IT USED TO BE

A glimpse of one of the trenches in the Canadian Memorial Park, showing how it has been preserved, as far as possible, in its war-time condition. The only radical change wrought by man is one which has been deliberately effected to *avoid* change; this is the substitution of concrete sand-bags for the perishable originals. Otherwise Nature alone has made alteration, doing her best to heal the scars upon her face, and to obliterate with rust such relics as tin hats.

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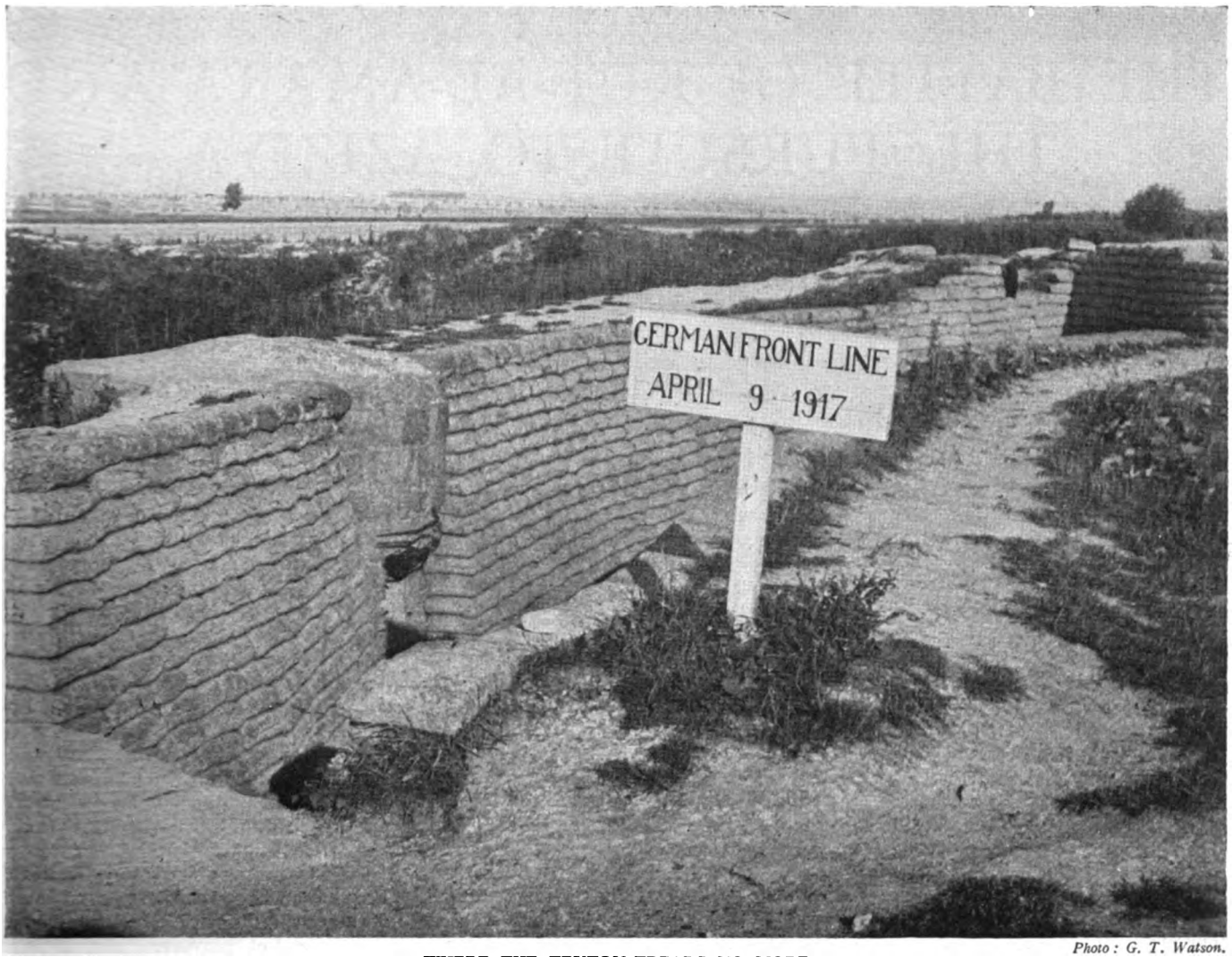

Photo : G. T. Watson.

WHERE THE TEUTON TREADS NO MORE

This old German trench, complete with pill-box, seems to date from a time infinitely more remote than that of its Canadian fellows, which are, after all, still in Canadian possession. In the background, its pallor darkened here and there by woods, its wide expanse seamed in typical French fashion by tree-lined roads, the immense plain stretches away toward the horizon. Vimy lies midway along the Lens—Arras route, but several other ways chequer the landscape near the Ridge.

arrived to spend the night within reach of the telephone), and the late Captain Albert Ball, V.C., D.S.O., his tunic as yet bare of any ribbon whatsoever, set out in the company of his brother-newcomers to find the billet which fate and conspiracy had allotted to him. And thus ended the now ex-Air Force Englishman's first meeting with one who was to become established as perhaps the greatest single-handed exponent of the military aeroplane serving on the Western Front.

Fortunately, he had the good sense to keep his thoughts to himself. But when he retired to bed that night he was still thinking of that boyish figure, with its mop of jet-black hair surmounting a pair of penetrating dark eyes, which he so well remembered having seen come towards him on that May evening in 1916; and it was not, perhaps, unnatural that, when he set forth from Arras on the following morning, instead of travelling Vimyward as he had intended, he first took the long, straight road which leads in time to St. Pol, but before that, if you know the turning, to Savy. . .

Here lay Savy Aerodrome

But, arrived at the level of Aubigny, he turned off to the right, and left his car, coming almost immediately to a broad, bare plateau rising above the Scarpe and reaching northwards to the horizon without let or hindrance from any man-built obstruction. Some young cows were grazing in the middle distance. They looked up, and, seeing the visitor, came inquiringly toward him, no doubt wondering what brought an obvious foreigner to such a bleak and uninteresting part of the country, and what made him stoop to examine the ground at his feet where the marks of former temporary shelters (mostly canvas-covered and of fragile construction) still showed amid the long grass.

But they gave up advancing when they saw him turn and move away, and, after the manner of cattle, forgot all about him and retired the way they had come; while he, with his thoughts heavy upon him, slowly descended into the valley of the Scarpe. And as he breasted the slope of the little bridge over the stream, down whose steep banks the fat rats used nightly to tumble to the echoes of ·45 Colt revolvers, it seemed to him that he heard the tramp of feet behind him; and instinctively he edged to one side.

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CHAPTER LV

THE BATTLE OF KUT-AL-AMARA AND THE PURSUIT TO AZIZIYA

The years of 1914 and 1915 will ever be remembered as the black period of the Great War. Nor was 1916 much better. But in 1916, in spite of set-backs, signs were not lacking that the tide was beginning to turn, and they first appeared on the Eastern fronts. In Palestine the Turks met with a sharp reverse at Romani, while in Mesopotamia their success at Kut was not exploited. On the contrary, they were not in good case, and in the early months of 1917 the curtain rose on the drama of which the climax was to be the fall of Baghdad. Here are described the operations preliminary to General Maude's capture of the City of the Caliphs, operations important in themselves, but of even greater significance in their relation to the ultimate victory to which they were the prelude.

With the fall of Kut, active operations on the Tigris front ceased for the time being, and the troops took up once more the dreary routine of trench warfare.

The All-pervading Dust

The hot weather was just commencing, bringing with it the threefold plague of dust, heat, and flies. Any movement of men, animals, or wheels raised thick clouds of fine penetrating dust. Nose, eyes, and mouth were never free from it: it got into food and water and acted as a powerful irritant on the stomach. Later on, when the Shamal blew, the heat would be less trying, but the dust worse than before.

At no time between sunrise and sunset was it safe to be without a sun-helmet. The shade temperature by day fluctuated between 115 and 130 degrees Fahrenheit: outside, a wind like the blast from an open furnace scorched the skin. So dry was the atmosphere that the dead Turks that still lay around Bait Isa flared up like torches at the touch of a match.

There is an Arab proverb that runs: "When Allah made Hell he found that it was not bad enough. So he made Iraq and added flies." It was impossible to eat or drink without swallowing flies. They settled in clouds on everything in tents, dug-outs, and trenches. A squadron of cavalry on the march appeared to be clothed in chain-armour, and above each man's head there hovered a wisp of blue smoke. A closer inspection revealed the unmistakable steely glint of flies. There was no means of keeping them off; and at nights, when they disappeared, their place was taken by the mosquitoes and sand-flies.

Life in the trenches was in some ways preferable to that in camp behind the lines. In the presence of the enemy the monotony was less deadly. Men who had been in France sighed for the villages and estaminets behind the lines: all were sick for the sight of shops, houses, trees, flowers, faces in the street, and all the small familiar things that one does not miss until they are absent. Here was neither stick nor stone to break the sameness of the desert landscape.

Heat and Health

A Mesopotamian hot weather under canvas or in the open is an extremely trying experience at any time, but arriving on the top of the reaction caused by the failure to relieve their comrades in Kut, the effect on the health and morale of the troops was serious. In the month of June 11,000 officers and men were invalided out of the country, in July 12,000, and in August a further 11,000. Coming from an effective strength of some 50,000, these figures speak for themselves.

To the troops living in this inferno there was granted twice in each day the glimpse of a vision at once tantalising and inspiring.

To the east, a hundred miles away across the barren and scorching plain, rose the towering bulk of the Pusht-I-Kuh mountains. Each morning, in the clear air of early dawn, the rising sun would touch up the snow-clad peaks with crimson: again towards evening, after the daily dust-storm had subsided, the slanting rays of the setting sun lit up the green and pleasant contours of these eternal hills, delighting the eyes and recalling to many a war-weary soldier the words of the Psalmist.

The Indians are a home-loving race, and many of them fed their imaginations on the thought that on the far side of the hills lay their own land. This was true, though the nearest point on Indian territory was not less than 1,500 miles distant as the crow flies, and considerably further by any route practicable for a man on foot.

Two Mussulman followers, unable to bear longer the intolerable weight of their home-sickness, set their faces towards the hills and ran away, to be picked up months later on the borders of India, footsore and half-starved, by the Seistan Field Force. Alone and without money or weapons, they had crossed the whole breadth of Persia and half Afghanistan, begging their bread from the Faithful by reciting a few texts from the Koran. Having glimpsed India, they were despatched back to Mesopotamia by the next boat and served faithfully with a field battery until the end of the War.

The Turks Evacuate Sinn

Half-way through May our patrols on the right bank reported that the Turks were withdrawing from their positions. A cavalry reconnaissance found that the Sinn trenches and Dujaila redoubt were empty, and the 3rd Division moved forward to occupy them.

"The column started at 4 a.m., reached the Dujaila redoubt at ten and Imam al Mansur (a Mosque in the desert surrounded by a few Arab huts) at two in the afternoon. It was a sixteen-mile trek. The water in the bottles gave out, and there was not enough in the lorries to go round. After ten o'clock men were dropping every few yards: they simply pitched over and lay where they fell. I have a picture of a doctor and a padre sitting beside a maniac whose helmet had fallen off, and who was beyond physical or spiritual ministration. Seven in one regiment died."[1]

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

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The sanitary arrangements of the Turks left a good deal to be desired, and the enemy had suffered from cholera. There were now several outbreaks of this dreaded disease amongst the British troops.

The occupation of Sinn, the blowing-up of some ammunition barges by Turkish gun fire, a successful action against hostile Arabs on the Euphrates, and the arrival in camp of a Sotnia of Cossacks belonging to the Russian army in Persia under General Baratoff, after an adventurous ride over the Pusht-I-Kuh mountains, were the only excitements, and formed the staple topic of conversation during the summer months.

Reorganising the Base

We have mentioned in a previous chapter how Sir Percy Lake, on taking over the command from Sir John Nixon, was impressed above everything with the need for reorganisation at the Base and on the Lines of Communication, and how he set about tackling the task.

After Ctesiphon the force in the country had been doubled, and then doubled again during the relief operations, without any corresponding additions being made to the administrative machinery, river shipping, and so on, which had already proved insufficient to maintain adequately General Townshend's single division. This had much to do with the tragic failure of the relief operations, and the sufferings of the troops during the hot weather of 1916 were largely due to this evil legacy of past mismanagement.

The War Office took over the control of operations in February, 1916: in July the administrative control of Force " D " was also taken out of the hands of India. The whole resources of the Empire were now available for the prosecution of the campaign.

Effective steps were taken to put things right before operations at the front recommenced. The port of Basra was reorganised, and many miles of wharves and roads were built: labour corps were enlisted all over the world and sent to the Shatt al Arab; the river fleet was reinforced and reorganised: railways were built from Basra to Amara on the Tigris and Nasiriya on the Euphrates, and a light railway constructed from Shaikh Saad to supply the troops in the newly occupied positions at Sinn.

England had been deeply shocked at the account of conditions given by the witnesses appearing before the Mesopotamian Commission. But in December, 1916, Major Godfrey Collins, M.P., who had been sent out by the Army Council to report on the working of the Quarter-Master-General's services and had spent four months in the country, could report home: " Whatever may have happened in the past, everything that human foresight, money, and work can do is being done to-day for the welfare of the troops."

Accounts of administrative work do not make spectacular reading, but the reforms introduced by Sir George MacMunn on the lines of communication, Sir George Buchanan at the base, and Sir William Willcox and others in the medical services, constituted the solid rock on which all our subsequent successes in the field in Mesopotamia were based.

General Maude takes Command

In July, General Gorringe, who had been commanding the Tigris Corps, was invalided, and General Maude took over from him. When Sir Percy Lake fell sick in August, General Maude was appointed to take over the command of the whole force.

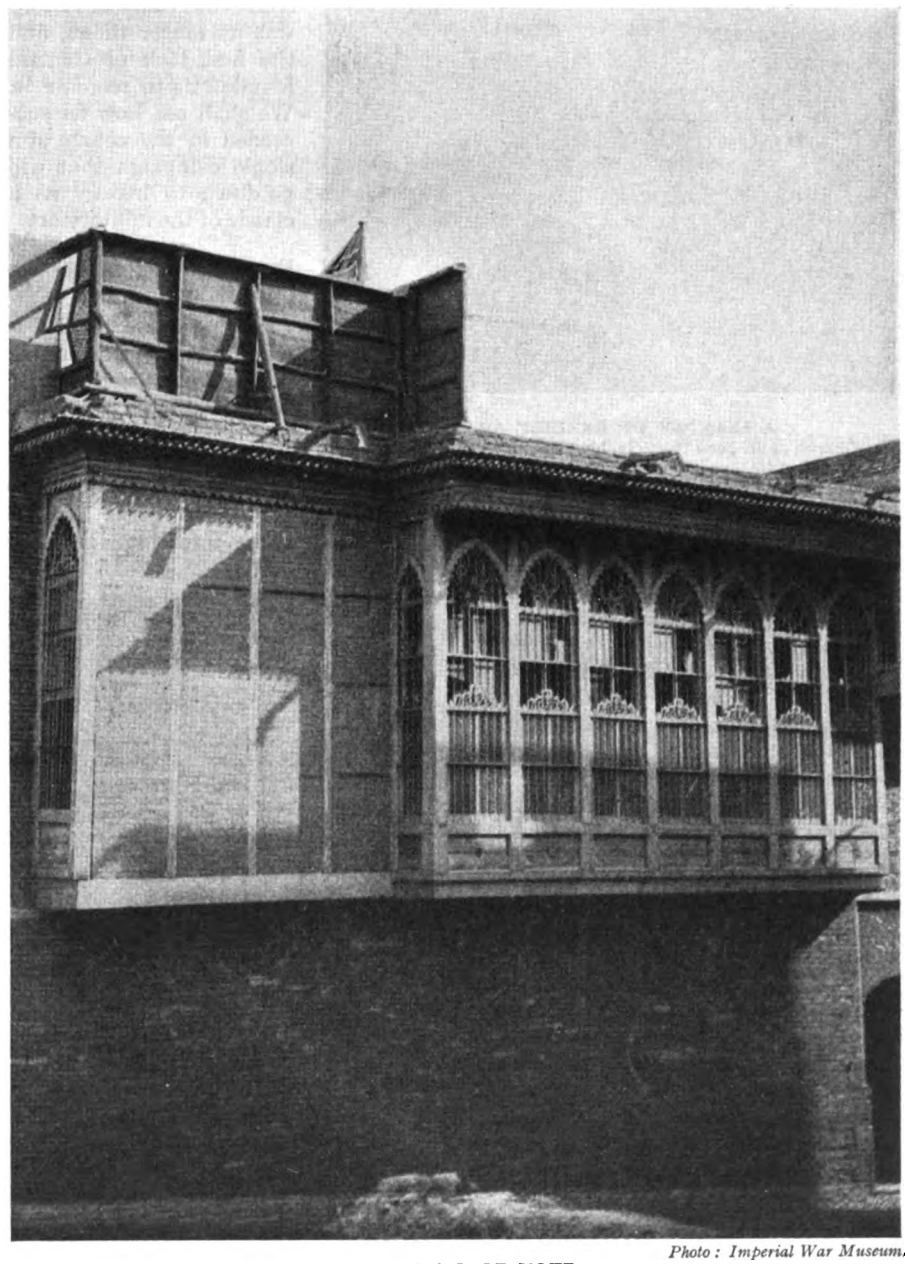

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A BUILDING OF NOTE

Not very imposing in appearance, perhaps, this Mesopotamian mansion: but a building of no small historical significance, for it is the house occupied by General Townshend during the famous siege of Kut. The story of that tragic but thrilling episode has been told in the previous chapter on the progress of our most easterly campaign. Here and in succeeding pages the tale is taken up anew, and the fortunes of the distant British force are followed as once more they push on up the Tigris.

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Photo: A. J. Insall.

A GLIMPSE OF REBUILT ARRAS

The Church of St. Jean Baptiste, here shown, is perhaps the most distinguished feature of modern Arras. It is situated at the top of the town, and the original edifice was almost completely razed to the ground during hostilities. Note the horse-flesh shop on the right.

Curiously enough, the new Commander-in-Chief of an army predominantly composed of Indian troops had had no previous experience of India or the East. All his regimental soldiering had been done in the Coldstream Guards. He was known as a keen, well-read soldier who had held important staff appointments in peace and seen war service in Egypt and South Africa. He went out to France in 1914 on the staff of the III Corps, and commanded successively an infantry brigade and a division. He commanded the 13th Division in Gallipoli, and in the later battles of the Kut relief operations in Mesopotamia, where he was the most junior of all the divisional generals.

Besides being an inspiring leader, General Maude also had an unrivalled knowledge of staff work, and abnormal powers of concentration. These last qualities were peculiarly necessary in view of the shortage of trained staff officers and the urgent importance of getting the administrative arrangements into working order before proceeding with the campaign.

In the course of the last months Mesopotamia had become a grave of military reputations—one after another, a dismal procession of unsuccessful divisional, corps, and army commanders had passed down the river. The fine British and Indian Regiments that they commanded had shown time and again that they were prepared to do their duty, and die if need be: but they were fighting on in a fatalistic spirit under commanders in whom they had little faith. The confident spirit that compels victory was no longer theirs, and the first task of General Maude was to recreate it. We shall see how he succeeded in the course of a single campaign that will go down to history as a classic of the military art.

Reorganisation at the Front

In the course of the Kut relief operations a number of units had been hurried to the front and thrust into the fight without any proper brigade and divisional organisation. The old Tigris Corps had become unwieldy, and the troops on that front were now reorganised as the I Corps under General Cobbe, consisting of the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions; and the III Corps under General Marshall, with the 13th (British) and 14th (Indian) Divisions. The arrival of another Indian cavalry brigade from France made possible the formation of a cavalry division under General Crocker.

At the same time the troops on the Euphrates front were organised as the 15th (Indian) Division under General Brooking.

Machine-gun companies and trench-mortar batteries made their appearance in Mesopotamia for the first time. The divisions all had their proper allotment of land transport—hitherto there had never been enough to move more than one division at a time—and a number of mechanical transport companies were available.

During the hot-weather months the Turks had enjoyed almost complete command of the air. Modern aeroplanes were now sent out, and the Flying Corps was placed in a position to hold their own once again.

Whilst the reorganisation of the Base had been in progress, General Headquarters had been situated at Basra; as soon as the resumption of active operations was possible, General Maude moved up the river with his staff to a

Photo: A. J. Insall.

AN ASTONISHING RELIC

The old house seen here, No. 45, rue des Trois Visages, lies to the north of Arras cathedral (the Palais de St. Vaast, as it is called), and at one time must have been a fine mansion. But its interest for the British pilgrim is that, despite reconstruction and progress on every hand, the pillars on either side of the door still bear the British letters "H.Q." The house has been empty since the War.

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position where he could be in close touch with the fighting troops.

Plan of Campaign

On the left bank of the Tigris the Turks were still holding the hitherto impregnable position of Sannaiyat, where they were faced by our I Corps—3rd and 7th Divisions.

On the right bank, the advanced posts of our III Corps and the Cavalry Division were some twelve miles further forward. The Turks on this bank had retired to a series of entrenched positions close to the river covering the town of Kut.

General Maude's plan was to contain the Turkish force at Sannaiyat, whilst at the same time manœuvring on the right bank with a view to striking at the enemy's communications. The greater the distance from Sannaiyat at which the decisive blow could be struck, the better would be our chance of destroying the entire Turkish force.

The first step was for us to advance to the Hai and establish ourselves securely astride that river. After that, the Turkish forces in the Khudaira Bend and the Hai Salient positions must be destroyed piecemeal. The final operation would consist in crossing the river somewhere about the Shumran Bend.

Up to the last moment General Maude preserved the strictest secrecy with regard to his intentions. On December 10th he issued orders for an advance to the Hai. The offensive was about to begin.

The Advance Begins

After two months of cooler weather and a good deal of intensive training, the health and spirit of the troops had improved out of all recognition. The 13th Division, whose young soldiers had suffered most during the hot weather, had spent the last few months out of the line at Amara. Early in December they were on the march for the front with the knowledge that the long-expected hour had struck.

The offensive opened on the night of December 13th, when the Cavalry Division and the III Corps surprised the Turks on the Hai and crossed the river. The Turkish cavalry and a weak infantry brigade were driven in, and our troops advanced to within striking distance of the Turkish Bridge at Shumran. The bridge was bombed by our aircraft and destroyed, and in the course of a few days of marching and fighting the 13th Division succeeded in establishing themselves round the Turkish trenches in the Hai Salient.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

HÔTEL DE VILLE AND BELFRY: ARRAS
The prototype of this reconstructed belfry became the target for 69 German shells in October, 1914, and was brought down a few days after the razing of the Hôtel de Ville. The above photograph was taken from a small street leading off the Petite Place.

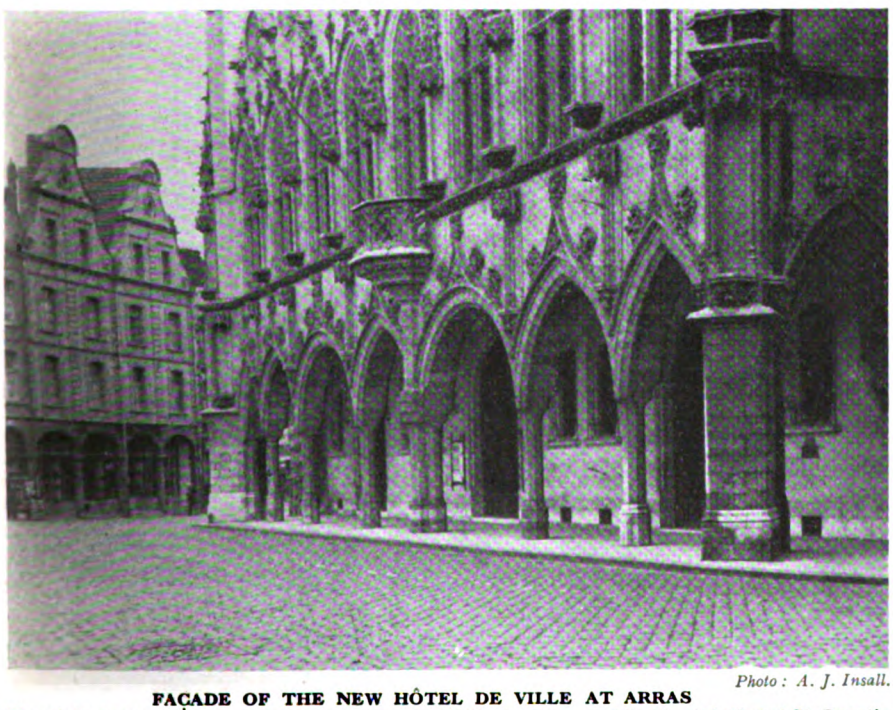

Photo: A. J. Insall.

FAÇADE OF THE NEW HÔTEL DE VILLE AT ARRAS
The original Town Hall was finished about the year 1500, closely resembling in style that at St. Quentin (completed 1509). The belfry, of which the new version is an exact replica, was completed in 1554, and was the highest in France, 365 steps leading to its top. Observe the little balcony projecting from the façade above; the original of this used to accommodate the magistrates when they read out new laws, etc.

On December 20th, the 40th Brigade and the Cavalry Division made a cast upstream in the hope of being able to effect a surprise crossing at the bend of the river four miles west of Shumran. The bridging train was brought up and some pontoons launched, but the troops were ordered not to run the risks of a stubbornly contested crossing. The attempt was made in daylight, and there was no surprise about it. The crew of the first pontoon, manned by the South Wales Borderers, were soon put out of action by enemy snipers. The whole operation was intended as a feint, and it probably had the effect of making the Turks believe that a crossing was impracticable.

These initial operations placed us in firm possession of the Hai and cut off the Turks from the supplies that they had been drawing from this area. The cost in casualties had been small and the

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effect on the morale of the 13th Division was considerable. During the next fortnight all action was interrupted by heavy rain.

Khudaira Bend

The next phase was to capture or destroy the Turkish force holding the Khudaira Bend. The enemy were occupying a position consisting of two carefully prepared lines of trenches sited in a bend of the river, and their artillery and machine guns on the left bank were in a position to bring enfilade fire to bear on the attackers.

The operations started on December 22nd, when the North Lancashires, from the 13th, and the H.L.I. from the 3rd Division, drove in a wedge and occupied a point on the Tigris between the two enemy trench systems.

The 8th and 9th Brigades of the 3rd Division now worked their way forward, digging in by night, until they were within 300 yards of the Turkish trenches in the Khudaira Bend. On the morning of January 9th, both brigades advanced to the attack covered by a heavy artillery bombardment. A thick mist lay over the ground and the attackers reached their objective with little loss. But the Turks were on their mettle and fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place in the trenches. Manchesters, H.L.I., Gurkhas, and 93rd Burma Infantry plied bayonet and bomb with deadly effect; most of the garrison died where they stood.

Whilst the captured position was being consolidated and our bombers were making their way down the trenches on either flank, the Turks launched a heavy counter-attack from their second line. Advancing through thick scrub, they were invisible until they were on top of us. In the mist and confusion, our artillery were unable to distinguish friend from foe, and held their fire.

Fighting to a Finish

The leading company of Manchesters found themselves pinned in a trench from which it was difficult to use their rifles. Their Lewis gun jammed; but the gallant remnant hung on, cut off from all support, and fought to a finish until they were practically exterminated. The Turkish dead found there next morning outnumbered ours by two to one. The wave swept on and caught a second party of Manchesters on the flank, driving them back to the trench we had captured, where it was held up.

"In the meanwhile the Turks pressed down the trench on our right. Here a small working party of the 34th Sikh Pioneers under Lieutenant Gordon found themselves with a handful of Manchesters in the crisis of the action. They held the breach, built up a block, and bombed the Turks lustily for hours. Other Manchesters joined them. Captain Close-Brooks was killed as he stood on the parapet and directed the bombing. Five officers of the Manchesters took over from him in turn and all were killed. Captain Henderson alone survived unwounded and earned a bar to

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE RAVISHED FANE OF HENDECOURT

Hendecourt-lez-Cagnicourt is situated 15 km. south-east of Arras, 5 km. east of Croisilles, and 3½ km. west of Cagnicourt itself. Lying as it did not far north of the Drocourt—Quéant switch-line, its military history is mainly concerned with the storming of that formidable obstacle, which was effected by Canadian troops of Horne's First Army, and the 17th Division of Byng's Third Army, on September 2nd, 1918. The above illustration tells the usual story of merciless bombardment.

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Photo : Keystone.

DEVOTED TO PIETY ONCE MORE

Heudecourt was not yielded without a struggle by the Germans. Originally reached by British forces on August 29th, 1918, it was then captured only to be lost, and was not retaken (this time permanently) until the troops already on the scene were reinforced by units of the XVII Corps on September 1st. Two cemeteries, both begun by the Canadian Corps after the breaching of the Drocourt—Quéant line, are now attached to the village. One—Upton Wood—contains 217 Canadian and 10 United Kingdom graves; the other—Dominion Cemetery—contains respectively 213 and 18 graves.

the D.S.O. that he had won at Dujaila, where he was one of only two officers who came out of the redoubt unwounded."

At nightfall the gallant survivors still held their ground, and we had driven the Turks out of the section of trench which they had recaptured earlier in the day. The day's work had given us a firm footing in the enemy position, and we had collected 7 officers, 150 men, and a machine gun, and buried a trenchful of Turkish dead.

The next day passed quietly. We advanced our line with little opposition, and it seemed that the back of the Turkish resistance was broken. Before evening the enemy was pinned in a narrow triangle of ground on the river bank.

The Resolute Turk

But the Turk was not yet beaten. During the night, the remnants of the battalions which had fought on the 9th had been withdrawn by boat and fresh troops ferried over. On the afternoon of the 11th, our assault was launched under cover of an artillery bombardment. The H.L.I. and 2/124th Baluchis succeeded in reaching the Turkish trenches, but their ranks had been thinned by a deadly enfilade fire from across the river. The enemy at once launched a heavy counter-attack, driving the remnants of the assaulting troops back to our old front line. Emboldened by their success, the Turks now formed up and came on at a steady trot against our position. It was a most gallant effort, but flesh and blood could not stand against the fire that was poured into them by our machine guns and artillery. They were literally knocked away by the weight of metal hurled against them.

From the 11th to the 18th there was constant fighting, our troops sapping forward and pushing the Turks back foot by foot. On the night of the 18th our patrols discovered that the enemy trenches were empty; the remnants of the battalions opposed to them had escaped by boat to the other bank. The Khudaira Bend was ours.

In the course of the eleven days' fighting, the 3rd Division had sustained 1,700 casualties, but the Turkish losses had been far heavier. As General Maude said in his despatch: "The fighting had been severe and mainly hand-to-hand, but the enemy, in spite of his tenacity, had more than met his match in the tenacity and resolution of our troops, and had learned a lesson which was to become more deeply ingrained on subsequent occasions." The effect of Maude's hammer blows was cumulative.

It would be a poor compliment to our fighting men to belittle the prowess of

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their opponents. These were the best Ottoman troops, and the dogged tenacity of the Turk behind a parapet is proverbial. They had held on with the swollen Tigris in their rear, their trenches pounded into a bloody shambles by our guns, and counter-attacked again and again with the utmost gallantry.

Arabs of Hai Town

While these operations were proceeding, the Arabs were exploiting their nuisance-value to the fullest extent against our scattered camps in the Sinn area. The line of the railway had been wired and reinforced by blockhouses: bombs and trip-wires were arranged, but the Arabs showed the greatest skill in avoiding these and getting away into the open country beyond with stolen rifles, horses, and booty of every kind.

On January 11th, the Cavalry Division made a raid on Hai Town, a considerable village on the Hai some twenty miles from Atab. They were given a friendly reception, and remained there for three days. Officers patronised the Turkish baths: the bazaars were emptied of rugs, samovars, and antiquated arms, and everything was paid for in good coin and sold in good humour.

Three days later, the division departed, seen off in the most friendly way by the inhabitants. But, as soon as the rearguard was clear of the town, the Arabs produced rifles from under their long cloaks and followed up the retiring cavalry. The action continued from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and there was some confused fighting where the road passed over broken ground. Several charges were made with the lance.

On the following day Hai Town was bombed from the air, but the moral effect would have been greater had the Cavalry Division returned and swept these treacherous scoundrels into the Hai, as they richly deserved.

The Hai Salient

After the capture of the Khudaira Bend the next stage in General Maude's methodical plan was to destroy the Turkish force occupying the Hai Salient. The position occupied by the enemy consisted of many miles of carefully prepared trenches covering the junction between the Hai and the Tigris.

The attack was carried out by the III Corps—13th and 14th Divisions—and the fighting was continuous from January 25th to February 5th. A detailed description of these trench-warfare operations would make tedious reading; each attack was carried out against a definite and strictly limited objective.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CTESIPHON ARCH

The mighty building, of which this fragment alone survives, was built by the Persian king Chosroes the Great, who ascended the throne in A.D. 531, and did very much to revive the glories of the ancient Persian Empire. The famous archway is in reality the remnant of a vast audience-hall in this, the White Palace, as it used to be called. The whole building once stood 150 feet high, the hall itself being 85 feet high; and as recently as 1864 the façade seen on the left was matched by a counterpart on the right. Readers will recall that the British fought a battle at Ctesiphon in November, 1915.

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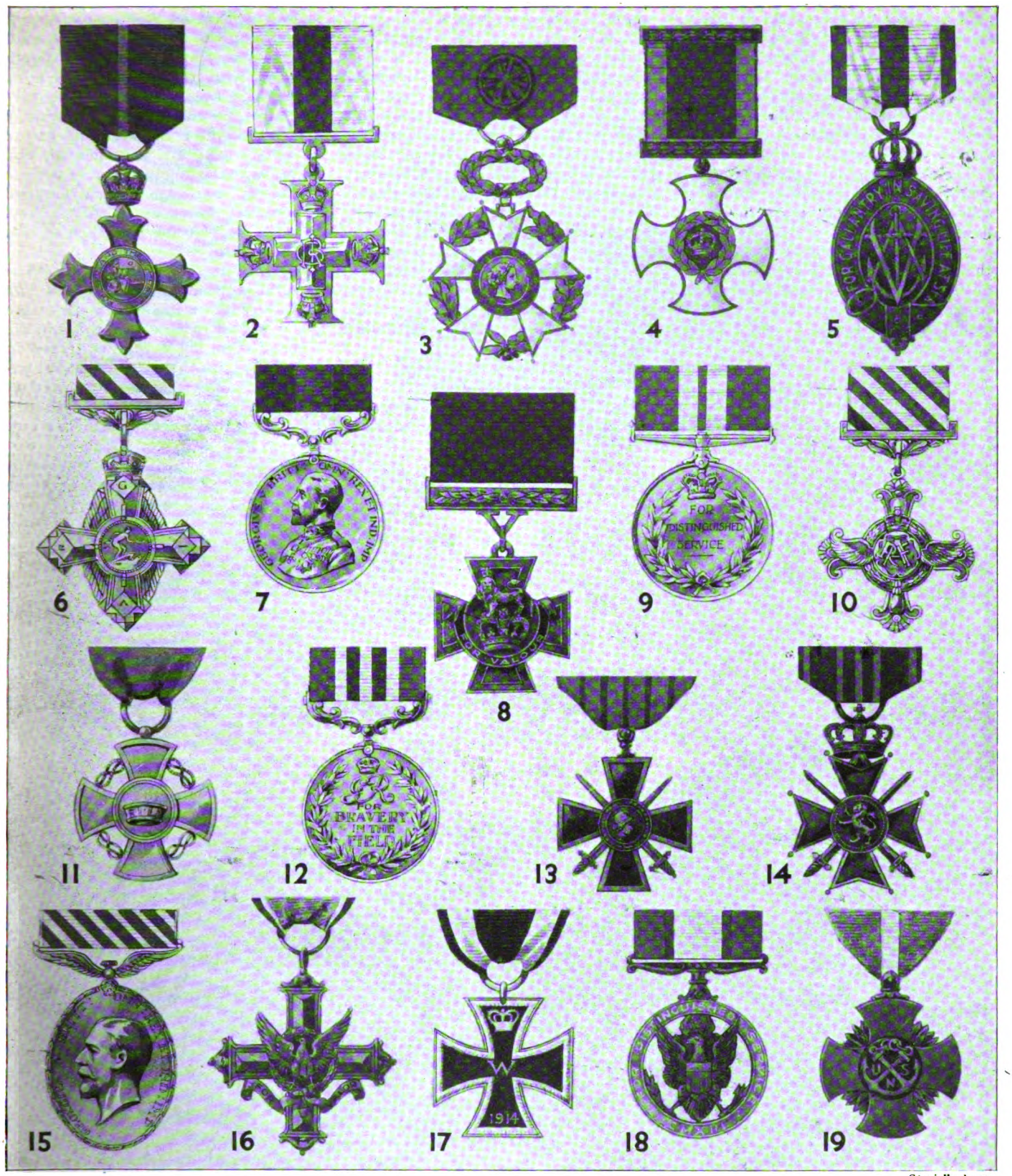

Specially drawn.

SOME OF THE MEDALS WON IN THE GREAT WAR

1—Order of the British Empire, Military. 2—Military Cross, Great Britain. 3—Order of the Legion of Honour, France. 4—Distinguished Service Order, Great Britain. 5—Albert Medal, Great Britain. 6—Air Force Cross, Great Britain. 7—Distinguished Conduct in the Field Medal, Great Britain. 8—The Victoria Cross. 9—Distinguished Service Medal, Royal Navy. 10—Distinguished Flying Cross, Great Britain. 11—Military Medal for Valour, Italy. 12—Military Medal, Great Britain. 13—Croix de Guerre, France. 14—Croix de Guerre, Belgium. 15—Distinguished Flying Medal, Great Britain. 16—Distinguished Service Cross, U.S.A. Army. 17—Iron Cross, Germany. 18—Distinguished Service Medal, U.S.A. Army. 19—Navy Cross, U.S.A. Navy.

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The Turks counter-attacked freely, displaying the utmost gallantry. Every square yard of this inhospitable soil was bitterly contested: again and again the trenches were so choked with dead that the survivors had to throw the bodies over the parapet to get some cover from the deadly hail.

The mere digging up towards the enemy position, the wiring and consolidating of our line, meant a toll of lives.

In a space of just over a fortnight the 40th Brigade dug seven-and-a-half miles of trenches, besides wiring and consolidating four miles of the enemy's captured line. It was all done in the open, generally at night under a dropping fire.

Then there was the extension of our line by bombing up trenches after the assault. In one place 1,000 yards might be gained without a shot fired: in another a bare 50 yards might cost a hundred and more lives.

Throughout, the artillery co-operation was perfect. The gunners advanced their observation ladders to within 1,000 yards of the line, where the observing officer could survey the trench system in front of him and pick up every movement through his field-glasses. These ladders made excellent targets for the enemy guns; the only security lay in there being as many as possible of them, some with dummy observers: but, even so, many were brought down by direct hits, the observer crashing thirty feet to the ground with a steel shield on top of him.

A Determined Irishman

The offensive opened on January 25th with an attack on both sides of the river —40th Brigade on the east bank, 39th Brigade on the west. "Eye-Witness" was going round the trenches of the 40th Brigade with the Brigadier—General Lewin—the evening before the assault. The objective consisted of 400 yards of trench in front of our line. This had to be taken, held, and consolidated, and no one save the bombing parties were to go a step farther: we had suffered unnecessary losses at Khudaira Bend through troops being carried on too far in the flush of victory.

"Eye-Witness" tells the story: "The General stopped at every second bay and asked the men how far they were going and what they were going to do. None of them knew, but none erred on the side of caution. The General explained tersely what was expected of them, threatening anathema to the heedless and extinction from our own

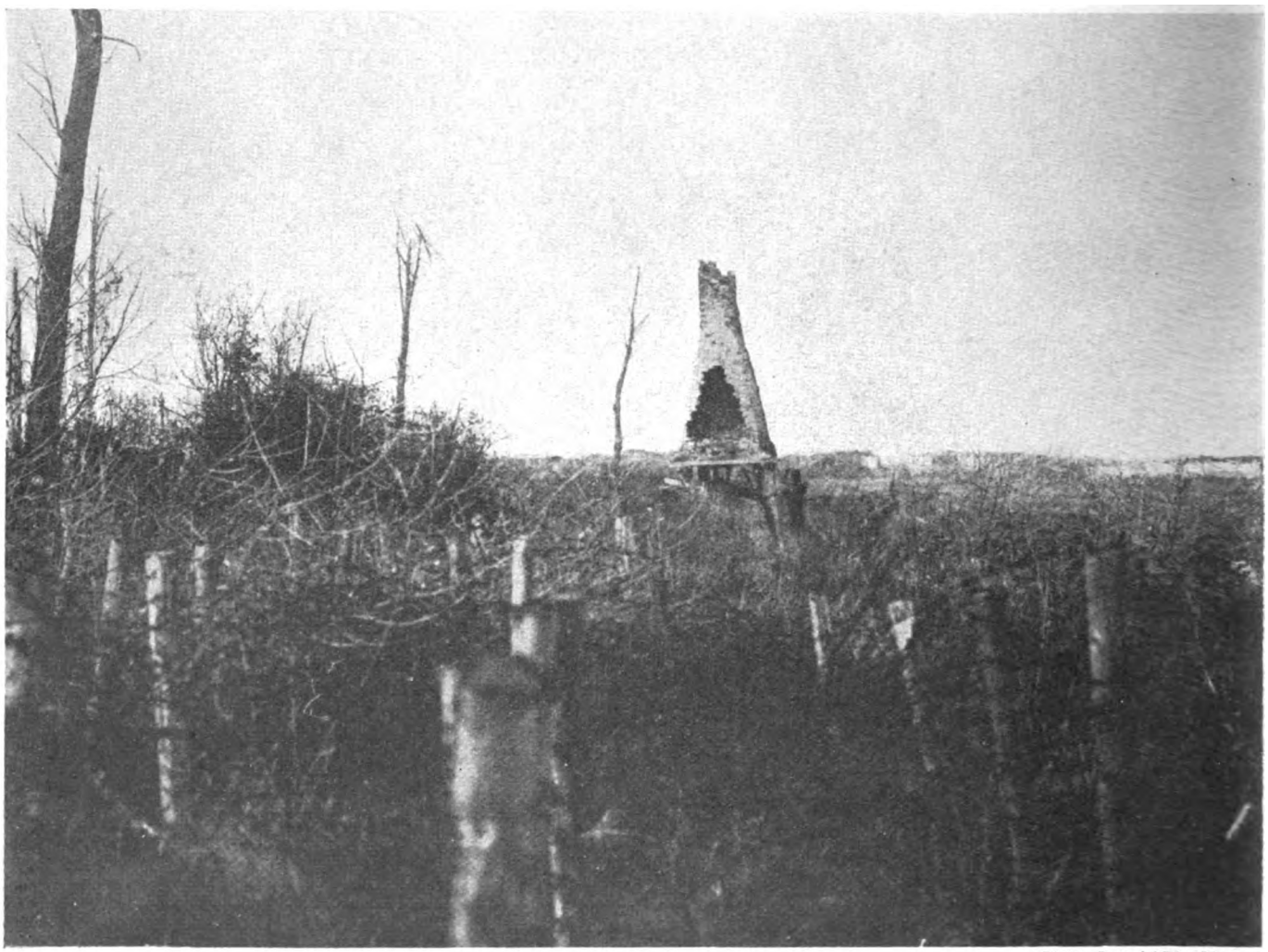

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON ARMISTICE DAY

A photograph, taken on November 11th, 1918, showing all that then remained of Delangre Farm, Fromelles. The latter is a village situated some 5 km. north-east of Neuve Chapelle, between Aubers and Le Maisnil. It stands at the junction of several lesser roads, including one which runs more-or-less direct to Lille. In May, 1915, at the time of the Battles of Aubers Ridge and Festubert, Fromelles was in German hands. Delangre Farm is situated something less than a mile due north of the village.

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Photo Keystone.

BACK TO NATURE

At the time of the Battle of Aubers Ridge (May 9th, 1915) Fromelles and Delangre Farm were occupied by troops of the *6th Bavarian Reserve Division*, while the nearest British troops to the farm were the 2nd Lincoln Regiment and 13th London Regiment, both of the 8th Division. After the two assaults of the Indian Corps, farther south, had proved abortive, the IV Corps launched an attack, and the 8th Division was given the task of advancing past Delangre Farm toward Fromelles. Not much headway, however, resulted. Above is a charming present-day farm scene.

guns. As we progressed, the cumulative uninstructedness of two battalions lent emphasis to a naturally emphatic tongue.

" At last we came to a small Irishman with clear, steady eyes and a true Hibernian smile. ' Well ? How far are you going to-morrow ? ' asked the General. ' Bedad, sir,' came the reply, ' I am going as far as I can. Eight or nine miles if they'll let me.'

" ' You will stay in the enemy's firing line,' the General said quietly and sternly. But the Irishman took this as an imputation on his spirit. ' Not I, sir,' he protested. ' It's into Kut that I'll be going.' "

Happily his company officer found the means of impressing caution on him. "Eye-Witness" met him in the captured trench next morning. He was busily cutting a firestep in the parados, converting it into a parapet, and waiting for the counter-attack to come on.

" I was with the Wiltshires in the trench when they went over. They looked thoughtful and a little strung up, but there was no tiredness about them. When the yellow flags were hoisted to show that they had got in, I crossed over and found the enemy's trench broken up by our artillery and heaped with dead, the parapets fallen in on a debris of rifles, ammunition, and litter of all kinds. . . .

" During the day the Turks made repeated attempts to bomb us out of the ground gained, both on our flanks and down the communication trenches leading to our centre. The Wiltshires and Royal Welsh Fusiliers stood their ground and out-bombed them every time.

" At two in the morning the Turks put in another counter-attack and were repulsed with loss. We counted 400 of their dead in the position, apart from a barricade of corpses they put up in a communication trench to serve as a block." [1]

The Danger-point

But on the west bank of the Hai the Turks' resistance was stronger, their trench system more elaborate, and held in greater force. The 39th Brigade attacked here simultaneously with the assault of the 40th Brigade on the east bank.

All went well at first. The 9th Worcesters and 7th North Staffords rushed the trench directly the guns lifted, and the Stafford grenadiers began clearing the communication trench on the left. This was the

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

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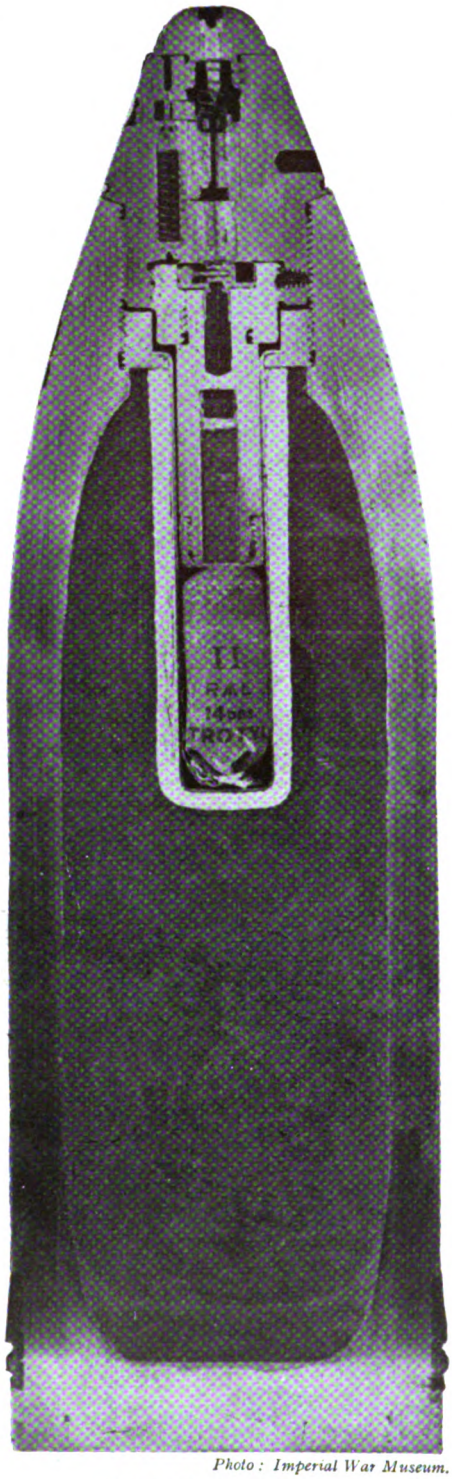

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HIGH-EXPLOSIVE SHELL
A sectional illustration of a type of shell which first came into use about 1885. Designed mainly for the destruction of fortifications and buildings, H.E. shells were not intended to be used against troops in the open. H.E. is more powerful in its effects than the "common" shell.

danger-point. The three officers commanding the bombing parties had fallen during the advance: the bombers themselves had lost heavily.

The Turkish bombers were massing and pressing down the trench. Just then a *Minenwerfer* came into action and dropped missiles with deadly accuracy into the rear of the Staffords. The fire was crushing; often as many as four or five shells were seen in the air at the same time. The attacking Turks now came on over the open, carrying no weapon or equipment save their grenades, with which they assailed our men.

By 11.30 a.m. the enemy bombers were closing in on the flank of the trench we had taken. The greater part of the line now gave way as the Turks counter-attacked under cover of an artillery and machine-gun barrage. But a few small parties of Worcesters and Staffords still held on, and the order was given for the Warwicks to advance.

The Warwicks came on over the open. Their commanding officer (Colonel Henderson) was killed, but they drove the Turks out of the trench. At three the Turks counter-attacked again, and the bloody struggle was repeated. The bombing party of the Warwicks was broken by the *Minenwerfer* on the left, as the Staffords had been, and the enemy flooded into our line.

The Brigade lost 35 officers and 900 men. Seven out of eight guns of the Stokes mortar battery were put out of action, three out of four machine guns were destroyed by the enemy fire. But failure often calls out finer and higher qualities than success: the Stafford bombers who fell to a man, the Warwicks who broke the counter-attack and rallied the wavering line, the Staffords and Worcesters who stayed in the trench side by side with the Turk, will not soon be forgotten.

Punjabis Push On

During the night the 14th Division relieved the 13th on the west bank, and on the morning of the 26th the 82nd Punjabis and 26th Punjabis attacked and took the first line. The dreaded "Minnie" was put out of action by the bombers of the 82nd.

During the advance a company of the 26th went out too far to their left, overshot their objective, and swung in again on a point in the enemy's communication trench. The mistake was turned to brilliant account and decided the action. This company wiped out the team of an enfilading machine gun on their way, established themselves in their unauthorised post—entirely cut off from support—and kept down the Turks' heads in the trenches from which they should have counter-attacked.

This saved the 82nd, who had already lost half their strength, from a pressure that might have proved overwhelming, and in the afternoon they were reinforced by a company of the Hants, the remainder of the battalion coming up

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FOR 6-INCH GUN OR HOWITZER
A late type of shell with a long-radius head and fuse-hole suitable for an exploder container. The weight complete is 100 lb., and the shell shown here is plugged (i.e. in place of a fuse a metal plug has been inserted, and so the shell cannot explode).

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and taking over from the Punjabis after dark.

On February 1st, the 8th Cheshires of the 40th Brigade attacked on the east bank. They went over after a short but intensive bombardment and, after reaching their objective, their front and flanks were covered by our artillery and machine guns. A counter-attack was broken up before it got well under way, and the bombers of the 38th and 40th Brigades proceeded to work outwards to enlarge the break in the Turkish line.

The whole of the objectives were cleanly carried by the 13th Division at a cost of not more than 70 casualties. The Turks now retained only a narrow foothold on the east bank.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FOR A 60-POUNDER GUN

Also a late type, notable for its long-pointed head (8 cal. radius). The specimen here seen is fitted with fuse No. 103 and Gaine No. 2 Mark I. The weight complete is 60 lb., and the shell is charged with H.E.

Less Fortunate Battalions

Meanwhile, on the west bank, two battalions of the 37th Brigade had been less fortunate. The 36th and 45th Sikhs went over together, the latter on the right, the former on the left: both regiments were at full strength, and both were practically annihilated. Only 1 officer and 190 men survived unwounded.

"Eye-Witness" was able to piece together something of the story from the accounts of survivors. The Turks had laid a trap by filling in a communication trench down which our bombers were to go to secure the left flank of the attack. At the same time, they had prepared a shallow dummy trench outside their front line, with a machine gun sited to rake it from end to end. The 36th fell into the trap and were practically wiped out as they lay in the shallow trench. One gallant fellow found a scrap of cover and held on with his Lewis gun, which he worked till it jammed. He succeeded in making his way back alone forty minutes later, with four wounds, but his gun intact.

The 45th Sikhs on the right carried the first and second lines, and some even pressed on to the third. But, as soon as the 36th had been rolled up, their flank was exposed. The machine guns on their left were now switched on to them and an overwhelming counter-attack was delivered. A British officer was seen to collect what men he could; the Sikhs closed with their enemy in the open, bayonet-to-bayonet, but the gallant band was enveloped and overwhelmed.

A Bloody Revenge

On the morning of February 3rd the Devons and Gurkhas of the same Brigade (37th) exacted a bloody revenge for the lives of their comrades. Our artillery barrage was drawn in closer on the flank, but there was still enough metal flying about to make it a rough crossing. The Sikh dead lay thick on the ground and, making use of the cover, the attackers were able to creep up to within twenty-five yards of the Turkish trench before the guns lifted.

The Turks were caught emerging from

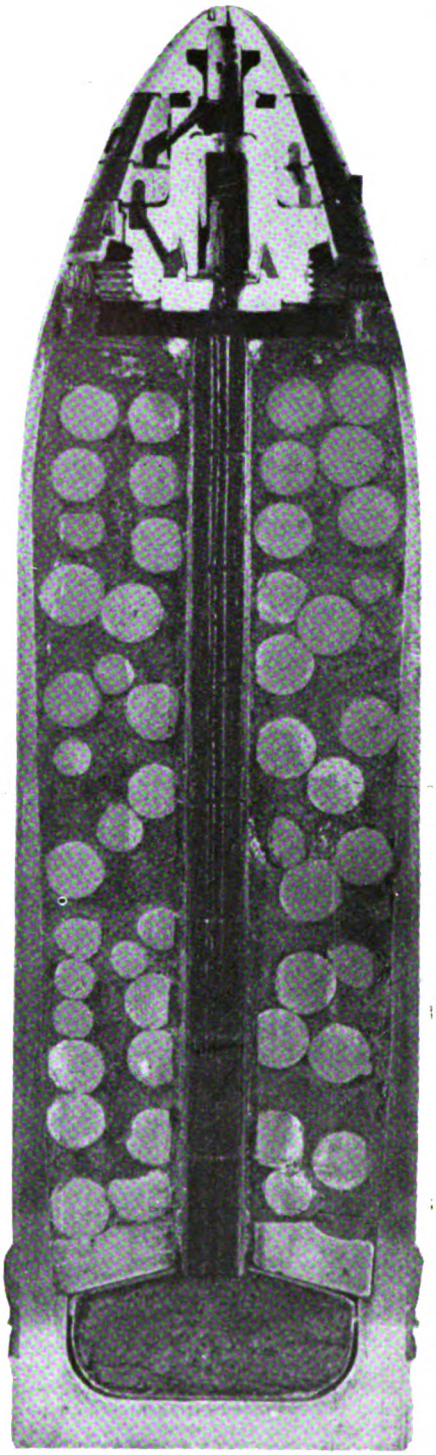

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SHRAPNEL SHELL

The normal use of shrapnel shell is by time-bursts in the air, but it is also used with percussion effect against shielded guns or light masonry. It is therefore always (except when fired against aircraft) provided with a time and percussion fuse, as shown above.

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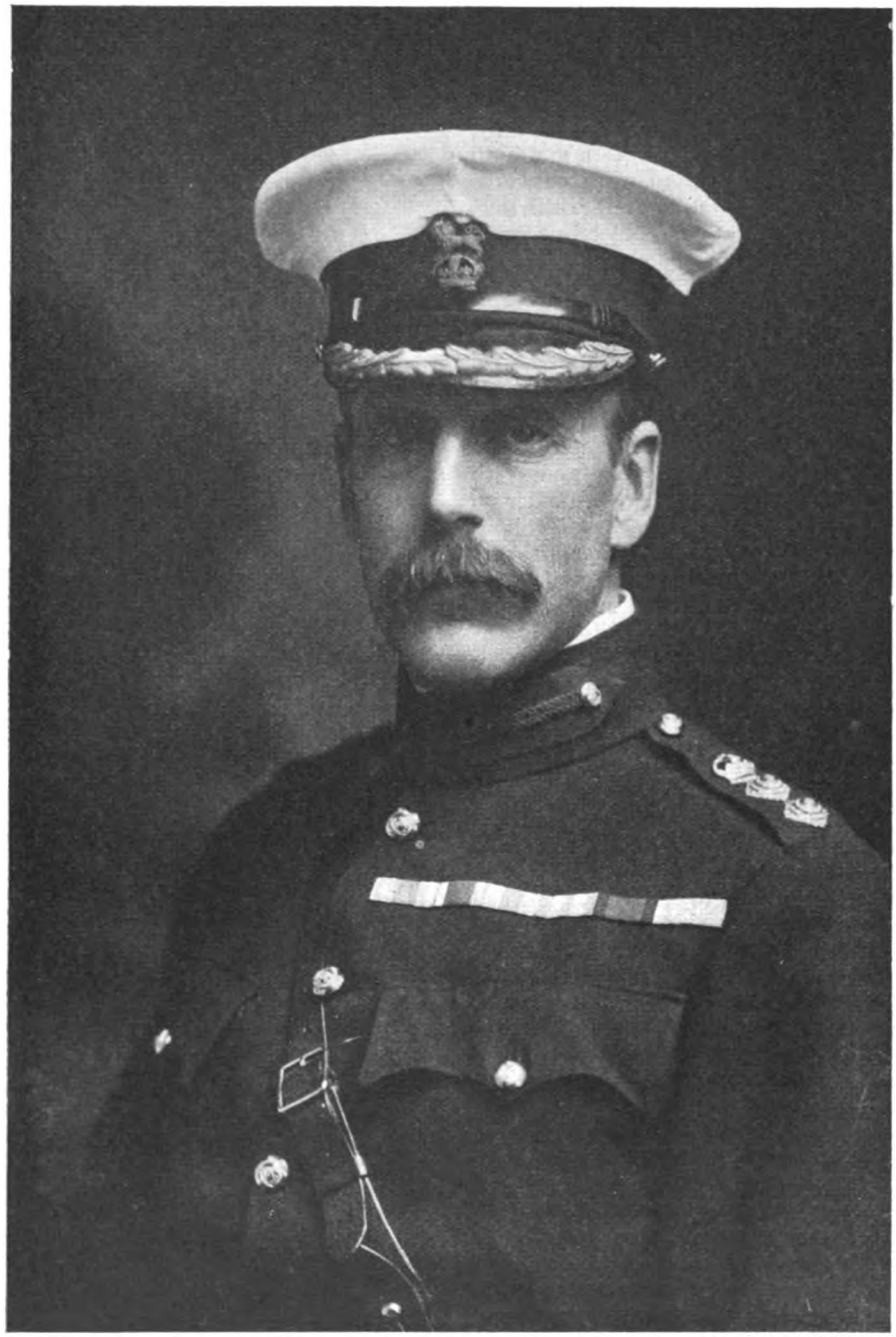

Photo: Elliott & Fry.

GENERAL SIR F. STANLEY MAUDE

Having joined the Coldstream Guards in 1884 and served in both the Sudan and Boer campaigns, General Maude, who was on the staff of the 5th Division when war broke out, was well qualified for an overseas post. In August, 1915, he took command of the 13th Division, with which he served in France, Gallipoli, Egypt, and eventually "Mespot." His brief but fine career in the last-named theatre is well known. Appointed to the chief command in the Kut area after the failure to relieve that town, he began his advance in December, 1916, and entered Baghdad in March following—but only to die there of cholera. Patient, tactful, and skilled, Maude ranks as one of the most successful generals of the War.

their dug-outs. The "Gurks'" wild lust of hunting carried them forward with an irresistible dash: they seemed hardly conscious that they were dropping fast.

The Devons were full of stories of their prowess with kukri and bomb. "Here, here, Sahib," one of them called, and pitching his bomb full on a Turk's head with a grin of delight, looked round at a paternal officer for approval. One little fellow was so excited that he followed his grenade into the trench before it burst, and he and his Turk were blown to pieces together.

This day's fighting cost the Turks more losses than they had suffered since Bait Isa, and it finally broke the back of the defence. On the next day, our patrols on the east bank found that their enemy had got away across the river in the night.

On February 9th we made another thrust at the enemy's main line west of the Hai. It was a hot fight. This time the Turks did not counter-attack until after dark. Four times they came on against the King's Own in our centre, and each time were driven back.

After their last repulse they retired towards the river, closely pursued by our men. The day's fighting showed a gain of a mile on a frontage of 4,000 yards. Next morning, two companies of the 62nd Punjabis entered the Liquorice Factory, the walled village at the junction of the Hai and Tigris which had been held by Townshend's men throughout the siege.

The Final Blow

The flank of the Turkish trenches on the west bank of the Hai linked up with another system of defences covering the Dahra Bend, and the next task was to clear these. From February 10th onwards our line was drawn ever closer round the enemy. The Gloucesters lost heavily in driving in the Turkish outposts. The 102nd Grenadiers rushed a redoubt in fine style. This was the first time that the battalion had been engaged since January, 1916, when they had been reduced to a bare hundred strong during the Kut relief operations.

At last, on February 15th, we were in a position to deliver the final blow. Soon after dawn the Loyal North Lancashires captured a strong point on the Tigris bank called "The Ruins." An hour later the main assault was delivered. South Wales Borderers on the left and Royal Welsh Fusiliers on the right went over in a wave, with 650 yards of open ground to cover.

"Eye-Witness" describes what occurred: "Just as they reached the enemy trenches a body of Turks issued from the centre of the position and gave themselves up. Their example proved infectious, and it was repeated all along the line. The prisoners came forward in a stream, waving white rags. For nearly an hour the procession was continuous: the Turks turned their guns on to them, but succeeded only in quickening the current.

"Something in the Turk's spirit gave way. His resistance collapsed. 'We do not wish to counter-attack,' one of the prisoners explained: and after being close up to our barrage one could understand the disinclination."

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The Turkish divisional commander succeeded in making his escape in a boat, but two brigadiers were captured, together with over 2,000 officers and men, and much equipment and ammunition that the enemy could ill spare.

Mystifying the Enemy

The position of the opposing forces was now a curious one. The Turks were still holding the Sannaiyat position on the left bank of the Tigris, where they were faced by the 7th Division. The remainder of their force was strung out over a line nearly thirty miles long, covering the communications of the defenders of Sannaiyat. Their great safeguard was the Tigris, now a swollen yellow stream in flood, 400 yards wide, with a current running a good five knots.

Our obvious course was to keep the enemy guessing, and to this end General Maude staged several dummy attacks before delivering his real blow. A Turkish aeroplane was discreetly permitted to elude our air patrols and to obtain an intriguing glimpse of preparations going forward for a crossing of the Tigris in the neighbourhood of Kut. Here, night by night, " all the inevitable noises of preparation were judiciously exaggerated, all the natural precautions of secrecy religiously observed."

On the 17th, an assault was delivered against the Sannaiyat trenches by the 20th Punjabis and 1/8th Gurkhas. The enemy was apparently taken by surprise and the attackers were able to reach the second line. But, as had so often occurred here, the conditions were made extremely difficult by mud and rain: the Turks counter-attacked and the two battalions were driven out again. However, this had the effect of inducing the Turkish commander to denude the rest of his line.

General Maude finally decided to force a crossing of the Tigris on February 23rd in the neighbourhood of Shumran, and the task was entrusted to the 14th Division. Speaking of this decision, the Official Historian of the campaign writes: " This selection was taken by the force generally as a favourable omen for the success of the enterprise, owing to the reputation that General Egerton, his staff, his officers, and his men had gained in the recent operations." The language and the sentiment are both reminiscent of Cæsar's *De Bello Gallico*. The fighting man is much the same throughout the ages.

7th Division Triumphs

In order further to mislead the enemy, another assault on the Sannaiyat position was staged for the 22nd—the day before the crossing was to be attempted —and this time the assaulting troops succeeded not only in effecting a lodgment, but also in maintaining themselves there.

The 7th Division had fought, bled, and sweated at Sannaiyat for the best part of twelve months. During the Kut relief operations they had lost 12,000 men here, practically their entire establishment. The shell-scarred ground was sacred to their dead.

First to go over on this day were the Seaforths and 92nd Punjabis, the same regiments that had led the desperately gallant but ill-fated assault of April 22nd, 1916. One likes to think that the shades of their dead comrades were there to witness the gallantry of their young successors. Over the first line they swept, and on to the second. The trench had been completely obliterated. In front of them the dirty-grey cloud of our bombardment still rose, swelling and bellying 50 feet high over the third line. Impossible to see through it, but the regular tapping of machine guns

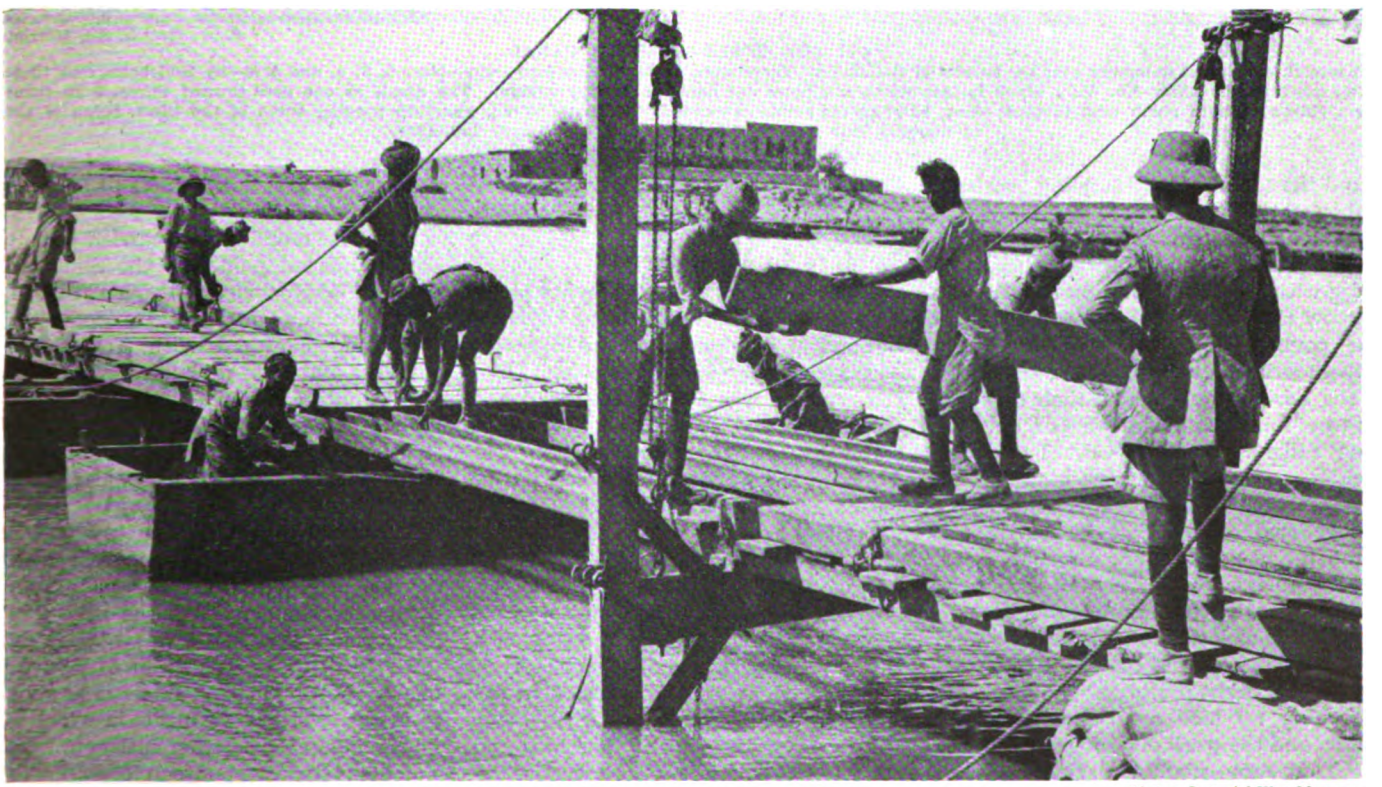

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRIDGING THE TIGRIS

A party of Indian sappers is here seen constructing a pontoon-bridge across the great Mesopotamian river. The Indian Sappers and Miners proved an invaluable adjunct to the British forces operating in many theatres, but notably in Mesopotamia and East Africa, where they were frequently able to carry on arduous labours under a sun which would have prostrated the unacclimatised Briton. Bridge-building was perhaps their commonest task, but a host of others, from the laying of telephone-cables to the construction of railways, fell to their lot.

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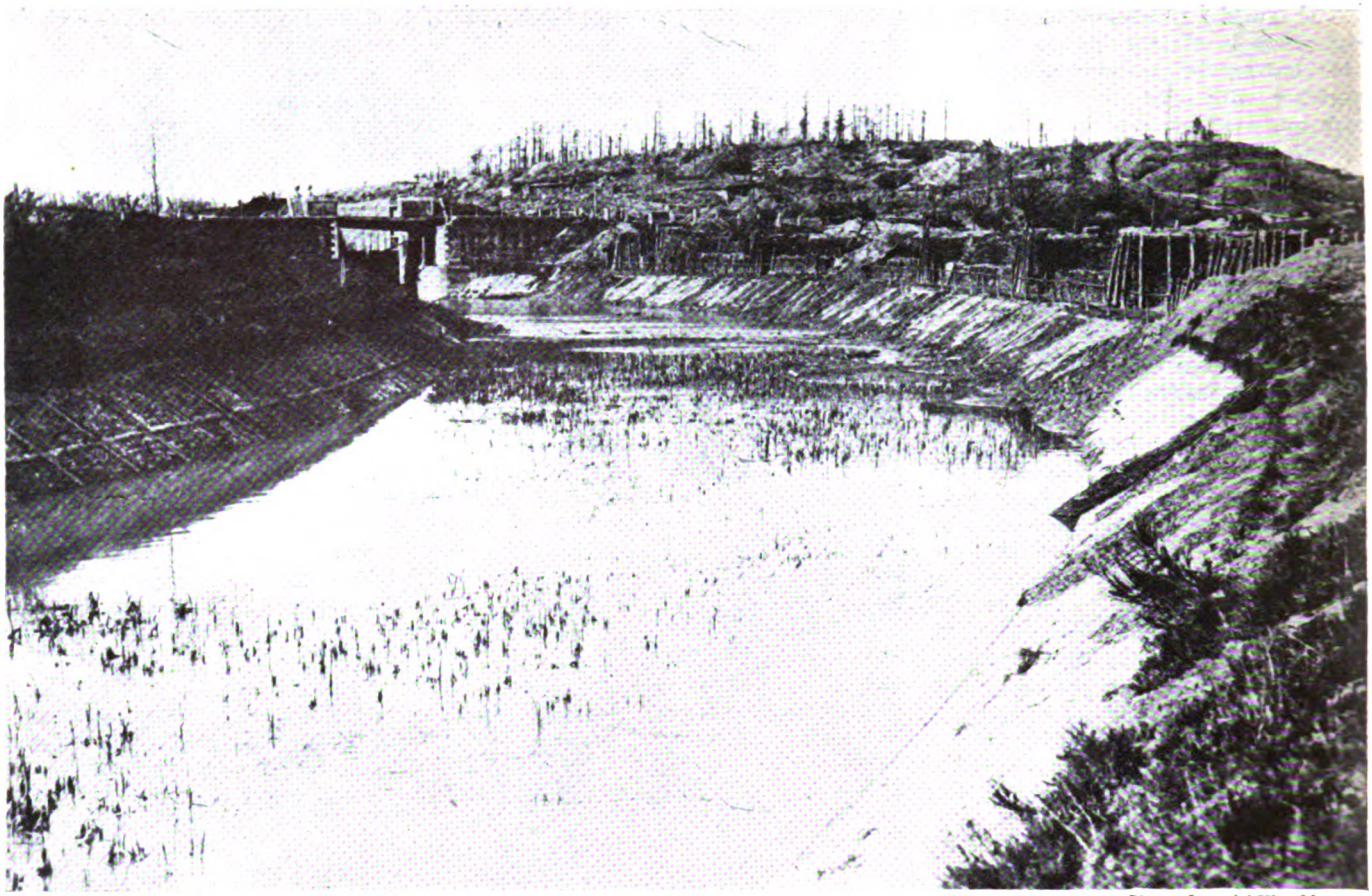

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON THE YPRES—COMINES CANAL

A stretch of this evil waterway near the hamlet of Hollebeke. There were no fewer than four locks—Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 6*bis*—by Hollebeke, and these two photographs show No. 6*bis*, which is just over a kilometre due north of the tiny village. The canal, as one goes toward Ypres, here turns a right-angle from north-west to south-west, skirting the southern extremity of Battle Wood, and then passing south of the Bluff, scene of the memorable little actions of February 14th and March 2nd, 1916.

and the sound of bullets going overhead showed that the Turks were still holding on somewhere through the smoke.

Highlanders and Punjabis began to dig with the determination of men who know that an enemy is forming up for a counter-blow and will be on to them as soon as the bombardment lifts. The Turks emerged from their dug-outs in the fourth line and came on over the open like a football crowd. Twice they came, and each time were crumpled up by our fire. A third and heavier attack developed on our left front. It was touch and go for a few moments; but our gunners never failed, and the enemy were almost exterminated.

At one o'clock the 28th Brigade went in on the right, and the Leicesters, 51st and 53rd Sikhs prolonged the line. By evening we held a continuous trench line, and the work of wiring could begin.

That same night a daring raid was carried out at Magasis by the 27th Punjabis, with the object of distracting the attention of the enemy from the preparations going forward at Shumran. The operation had been carefully prepared and everything went off without a hitch.

Raiders in Pontoons

A party of forty men, carrying hand-grenades and rifles with fixed bayonets but no ammunition, succeeded in getting across the river in six pontoons. The stream here was 800 yards broad and coming down in flood, and the rush of water drowned the sound of oars. The Turks were surprised, the picket on the bank was rushed, and the raiders started bombing their way down the trenches on either flank, covered by a box barrage from our guns.

When the recall rockets went up they returned in their pontoons, bringing a souvenir in the shape of a trench mortar. This diversion caused confusion in the Turkish camp and, on the morrow, enemy supports were still marching and counter-marching many miles away from the scene where the real crossing was taking place. The illusion that we meant business at this point was heightened by the erection of a forest of artillery observation ladders at Magasis during the night.

The real crossing was carried out at three different points in the Shumran Bend. The Norfolks went over at No. 1 Ferry. This was the 2nd Battalion, which had been captured with Townshend in Kut, and been re-formed from survivors and fresh drafts. "Eye-Witness" watched them that morning lifting their pontoons over the embankment and launching them—a cool and confident crowd.

"There was just light enough to see the other bank, but not to distinguish figures. At 5.30 word was passed to push off. The sentries on the other side did not discover what was happening until the first boat was within fifty yards of the shore. Then a single rifle shot rang out. Then a fusillade, in which a machine gun joined from upstream. . . . The first returning pontoon loomed into sight 300 yards downstream. It was quickly towed up to the ferry, manned again, and the wounded carried to ambulance dug-outs in the bund."

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The surface of the river was churned up by bullets, and soon shells began to throw up great clouds of spray. Men were hit in the pontoons, but only one pontoon was sunk. Second-Lieutenant Hornor of the Norfolks was the first man ashore: he captured a machine gun single-handed as it was about to open fire. Bombers cleared the bank for a distance of 500 yards and the Norfolks pushed forward to their front as our guns began to gain the ascendancy. By 9.30 the whole regiment was over and holding a strong bridgehead.

The Other Crossings

Meanwhile the 2/9th Gurkhas were crossing at No. 2 Ferry, 1,000 yards downstream, and the 1/2nd Gurkhas at No. 3 Ferry, 500 yards below them.

At No. 2 there was a muddy foreshore. As the first pontoons grounded, Major Wheeler leaped out, followed by a handful of his men, and made a dash for the bund. A Turk hurled his rifle and fixed bayonet at him, lifting the top of his scalp. Scrambling to his feet, he and four Gurkhas scattered a bombing party of forty of the enemy. Despatching one in the act of bayoneting Lieutenant Russell, who had fallen, he carried straight on with the few men he had, and occupied a trench 200 yards inland.

The fire here was so heavy that the ferry had to be abandoned after one and a half companies had got over. Happily, the last pontoon to make the crossing brought a much-needed supply of bombs and ammunition, enabling Major Wheeler and his gallant band to hold on all day. He was awarded the V.C. for his action.

The 1/2nd Gurkhas at No. 3 had an even hotter crossing. The leading party, under Lieutenant Toogood, succeeded in establishing themselves on the bank, and made contact with Major Wheeler 500 yards upstream, but it was impossible to reinforce them. Only two out of thirteen pontoons returned to their starting-point. These were remanned and set out again, together with two more that had drifted down from No. 2 Ferry. Only one reached the Turkish bank, and that with a single unwounded man in it.

"Eye-Witness" writes: "One could read the story afterwards in the mud. Wherever a keel had scored the Turkish shore there were Gurkha dead and dead Hants rowers who had been lifted from the boats. Many of the pontoons still lay stranded in the mud. One had a hole in its side, a direct hit by a shell, and nine dead in it. Dead Gurkhas lay tumbled about the parapet: some had pitched forward and lay sprawling over it with the impetus of the fall. Beyond

Photo: Keystone.

ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE FORGOTTEN

So thickly overgrown is the Ypres—Comines Canal nowadays that it requires more than a cursory glance to discover the presence of any water. Hollebeke hamlet, and the difficult ground north of the canal-bend shown in these illustrations, were captured on July 31st, 1917 (the opening day of the Third Battle of Ypres), by English troops of the 41st Division. We were again pushed back on Hollebeke in April, 1918, but the 9th Division managed to hold the line there.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

REMAINS OF A BRASSERIE

Vermelles, scene of this study, lies 4½ km. due west of Hulluch, in the Loos—La Bassée area. On April 27th, 1916, its vicinity was the scene of a fierce German attack preceded by a gas-discharge, a tear-gas bombardment, and a mine-explosion. Two minor infantry attacks succeeded in penetrating our trenches, but the enemy were speedily evicted. A second attack, on April 29th, was rendered abortive by a change of wind, which blew the enemy's gas back over his own lines.

were dead Turks who had counter-attacked from inland."

Bridging the Tigris

The remainder of the two Gurkha battalions now marched upstream to No. 1 Ferry, where they were able to get across and reinforce the Norfolks.

The work of bridging the river had already begun. The first waggon of the bridging train galloped up at 8 a.m. Chesses, buoys, ropes, anchors, and cables were dumped on the ground, and the Sappers were soon driving in the pickets of the land anchorage. The pontoons on their special waggons made an enormous target as they were cantered up over the open. A few men and mules dropped, but the casualties were surprisingly few. The enemy guns never found the bridge, although there were plenty of shells falling in the neighbourhood. By ten o'clock the fifteenth pontoon of the bridge was well out into the stream. By four in the afternoon the bridge was completed and troops and transport were pouring over it.

Meanwhile, the covering line of infantry had advanced as far as the ridge which spans the base of the bend in the river, taking 600 prisoners. When darkness fell on the night of February 23rd, the whole of the 24th Division was across. The shell-scarred ruins of Kut were ours once more, and the Turkish commander was going to be hard put to it to extricate his army.

There were high hopes in the British camp that night. Colonel Tennant, commanding the Flying Corps, wrote: "The excitement was intense, and all night long G.H.Q. camp buzzed with the subdued sound of work at high pressure. General Maude, imperturbable as ever, crouching over his maps by the light of a little electric lamp in the pit of his 40-lb. tent, discussed the plans for the next day and gave me *carte blanche*. An army on the run over flat desert and the complete mastery of the air; one's wildest dreams had come true."[1]

All that night the III Corps were crossing the bridge, whilst the Cavalry Division came up ready to go through in the morning. The patrols of the 14th Division spent the night in constant fighting. On the right of our line they gained nearly a thousand yards of ground.

Whilst the crossing was taking place twenty miles upstream, the 7th Division spent the day in a series of bombing encounters with the Turks in the Sannaiyat trenches. As late as 7 p.m. the enemy put in a strong counter-attack. But patrols sent out soon after midnight discovered that the fourth line had been evacuated. It was impossible to push forward through the maze of trenches in the dark, and the troops lay down to snatch what sleep they could before dawn. The night was bitterly cold.

[1] J. E. Tennant, *In the Clouds above Baghdad.*

Photo : A. J. Insall.

FROM VATS TO VICTUALS

The brasserie (or brewery) shown in the upper photograph stood next to Vermelles Château. Below, on the same site, a co-operative store has arisen, the new building being erected on the foundations of the old, and incorporating the original cellars. The 1916 operations above alluded to involved on the British side the I Corps, and on the German the *4th Bavarian Division*.

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The Turkish Rearguard

But the Turk is a stout opponent, with a wonderful faculty for extricating himself from desperate situations. By dawn, the garrison of Sannaiyat had covered the twenty miles to Shumran, leaving behind a few snipers to hold up the advance of the 7th Division.

The 14th Division began their advance soon after dawn. The 36th and 37th Brigades were leading and, elated by their success of the day before, they pushed on boldly. The first 3,000 yards were covered without a halt; the few Turkish riflemen and machine-gunners who held on to the last moment were bayoneted or shot. The 26th Punjabis, in a fine charge, cleared the Turkish barracks, whence our line was being raked by machine-gun fire. Several counter-attacks were broken up by our artillery.

But the resistance gradually stiffened as the day wore on until, finally, we found ourselves held up in a mass of nullahs and irrigation cuts. The Turkish guns were making good practice, and casualties were heavy. The Turkish rearguard were selling their lives dearly to enable the main body of their army to get away.

At 6.30 a.m. a British airman landed at G.H.Q. and reported that the enemy were in full retreat towards Baghdad. On receipt of this message, General Maude ordered the cavalry to cross the bridge and go through the 14th Division.

This was the opportunity that cavalrymen dream of, but seldom see. The ghosts of the cavalry commanders of history must have been watching at Shumran that day. General Crocker had six fine regiments (two of them British—the 13th and 14th Hussars), two machine-gun squadrons, and two Horse Artillery batteries ("S" and "V," R.H.A.), and not two miles away the remnants of the Turkish army were trailing across his front. Nothing but a weak rearguard with one flank in the air separated our squadrons from their legitimate prey.

By 11 a.m. the horsemen were passing through the 14th Division. But, for a reason that has never been adequately explained, they did not make the wide sweep round the Turkish flank that would have brought them within charging distance of the helpless, straggling columns. Instead, they allowed themselves to get involved in a dismounted fight with the rearguard, and made little progress all day. General Crocker broke off the action at dusk. By this time the opportunity had gone and the remnants of the Turkish army were saved.

Frisky "Lambs"

During the fighting on this and the following day, the enemy probably suffered more casualties from the action of the handful of light armoured cars with the force than were caused by the

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PILL-BOXES NEAR PETIT VIMY

The concrete machine-gun emplacements seen here are situated alongside the Lens—Arras road near Petit Vimy, a hamlet 1 km. distant from the western fringe of Vimy proper. The positions captured here on April 9th, 1917, by Canadian troops and the 13th Infantry Brigade of the British 5th Division, commanded Givenchy and Swallow Woods, and their capture caused the enemy to forgo his plan of launching a strong counter-attack from these localities.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

PETIT VIMY NEIGHBOURHOOD TO-DAY

The enemy's counter-attack having been frustrated, he began a withdrawal on April 13th, enabling Canadian patrols to occupy the southern part of Givenchy-en-Gohelle, to pass through Petit Vimy, and to reach the cross-roads—500 yards north-east of the village—seen in the forefront of this photograph. The capture of the hamlet was completed the same day.

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entire cavalry division. The " Lambs," as they were euphemistically called from the initials of their official title, " The Light Armoured Motor Battery," were in their element.

On the 24th, two cars that were scouting ahead of our infantry ran into some Turks holding a series of shallow nullahs. They worked down the line, one on each side, keeping ten yards out to get the full sweep of their guns, and too near in for the enemy artillery to fire on them. The Turks fought it out like men, pouring in a terrific fire. One car had eleven bullets through the port and the foresight of its machine gun shot off. The other car was hit by a bomb, which blew in the crank-case. But it was an unequal fight, and the enemy was practically annihilated.

On the 25th, a section of five cars repeated this exploit, doing tremendous execution amongst the Turkish infantry and winding up the day by shooting down the teams of a field battery from a range of 300 yards.

On the night of the 24th, the 13th Division went through the 14th, and caught up with the hostile rearguard about 11.30 a.m. The 38th Brigade was leading, and the Lancashire battalions deployed as they came under fire from the enemy guns, which again were making good practice and expending ammunition freely.

The advance-guard batteries of the 66th Field Artillery Brigade galloped on ahead of the infantry and came into action within 1,200 yards of the Turkish trenches, pouring in a deadly fire and distracting the attention of the Turkish gunners. Under cover of their fire, the infantry advanced rapidly, and the South Lancashires on the right succeeded in effecting a lodgment in the Turkish position. Here they remained for the rest of the day, carrying on a desperate bombing fight with the defenders.

Artillery Close to the Trenches

The 39th Brigade now came up on the right of the Lancashire men and pushed in their attack against the exposed Turkish flank. The 55th Field Artillery Brigade galloped forward with great gallantry and came into action within a thousand yards of the trenches. Under cover of their fire, Worcesters, Gloucesters, and North Staffords stormed the first and second lines.

The defenders then launched a vigorous counter-attack. The left of the 39th Brigade was forced back, and desperate fighting continued until two in the morning, when the enemy once more

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DISMEMBERED CHURCH AT FAVREUIL

Favreuil is situated close to Bapaume, being 2½ km. away from it in a northerly direction. It is not on the main Bapaume—Arras road, but stands at the junction of two by-roads leading respectively to Mory and Beugnâtre. At the time of the enemy withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, this village was among the many which fell into British hands in a horribly battered condition—as witness this picture, taken on March 20th, 1917, of the wrecked church.

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Photo: Keystone.

BASKING IN THE SUNSHINE OF PEACE

Lost again in March, 1918, Favreuil was regained for the Allies on August 25th by the 37th and New Zealand Divisions. This was the famous Sunday which also saw the carrying of the entire Albert—Bapaume road, and many villages south of Bapaume. Beugnâtre, however, which is barely 2 km. east of Favreuil, did not fall into our hands until the 27th. There is one British cemetery at Favreuil, in which are buried 342 United Kingdom, 26 Australian, 19 New Zealand, 3 South African, 1 Canadian, and 16 German dead.

began to retire. A number of prisoners, captured earlier in the day, contrived to escape during the counter-attack, but 14 officers and 300 men remained in our hands.

This was the last serious encounter that our infantry were to have for some time. It was not until March 7th that the enemy stood at bay once more on the Diala, in a last desperate attempt to cover Baghdad.

So far the Turks had conducted an orderly retirement. It was the action of the gunboats on February 26th that first introduced the element of panic and converted the retreat into a rout.

The day after the crossing at Shumran, H.M.S. *Mantis* landed a party and hoisted the Union Jack on the ruins of Kut. On the 25th the gunboats were co-operating with our infantry in the attack on the Turkish rearguard. It was not until the 26th that they received the welcome order to pursue.

H.M.S. *Tarantula*, *Mantis*, and *Moth*, with the *Gadfly* and *Butterfly* following, their decks cleared for action, passed our cheering infantry on the bank and disappeared round the bend. They had been waiting fifteen months for this day.

Just beyond Bughaila, 46 miles upstream from Kut, they came under a heavy rifle fire from infantry lining the bund. Some miles farther on, at Nahr al Kalek, the river makes a complete hairpin bend, and here the Turks tried to hold up the fleet. A battery and some machine guns were dug in at the apex of the bend, where they could rake the ships coming and going and fire point-blank into them as they passed.

Muzzle-to-Muzzle

The fleet came on at 16 knots, and our 12-pounders, pompoms, and machine guns exchanged shots with the Turks, almost muzzle-to-muzzle. The quartermaster and pilot in the conning tower of the *Mantis* were shot dead and the captain seized the wheel just in time to prevent her charging the bank at full speed. The plating was pitted with bullet holes, and shells struck masts, ladders, and rigging. The *Moth* was holed; but not one of the three ships was disabled. One man in five of the crews was hit.

Carrying straight on, the gunboats came on the retreating army streaming along the road which runs close to the river bank. Their machine guns played havoc. "Eye-Witness" rode over the scene next morning: "Turkish dead everywhere. Bullocks still alive and unyoked entangled in the traces of a trench-mortar carriage, broken wheels, cast-off equipment, overturned limbers, hundreds of live shells scattered over the country for miles. . . .

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" Here a wrecked field post office with Turkish money orders circling in the wind, there a brand-new Mercédès car, small-arms ammunition, grenades, a pump, well-boring apparatus, hats, boots, oil drums . . . then a whole battery of 12-centimetre guns, their breech blocks removed but buried too hastily near by, and betrayed by an entrenching tool."

At last they came up with the enemy shipping. The last vessel, mounting a British 4·7-inch gun captured in Kut, was sunk. The *Basra* was hit and run ashore by her crew. The *Pioneer* put up a gallant fight, but was run ashore on fire. Farther on, the *Firefly*, the gunboat lost by us at Umm al Tubal during the retreat from Ctesiphon, was overtaken and run ashore by her crew. Her former Captain—Commander Eddis—was under orders for home, but he had the satisfaction of taking her over and steaming with her into Baghdad before leaving to take up his new command in the North Sea.

A Routed Army

Now, hemmed in between the ships on the river and the cavalry closing in from the desert flank, bombed and machine-gunned from the air, and with treacherous Arabs skulking round to rob and murder their stragglers, the Turkish army was in a sore plight. For the moment, it had ceased to exist as a fighting force. But reinforcements were known to be on the way, and even a short respite would enable it to recover sufficiently to put up a stout resistance at one of the prepared positions this side of Baghdad.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

IN CONTEMPORARY FLÊTRE

Flêtre lies on the Bailleul—Cassel road some 3 km. east of Caestre. Probably the nearest it ever came to being in the battle-zone was when the Cavalry Corps rode through it on October 12th, 1914, while moving up from Hazebrouck to Reninghelst, and on the night of the 12th—13th engaged the enemy at Mont des Cats, close by. Thereafter the place was mainly known as a rest-billet, minor headquarters, and port of call for road-traffic.

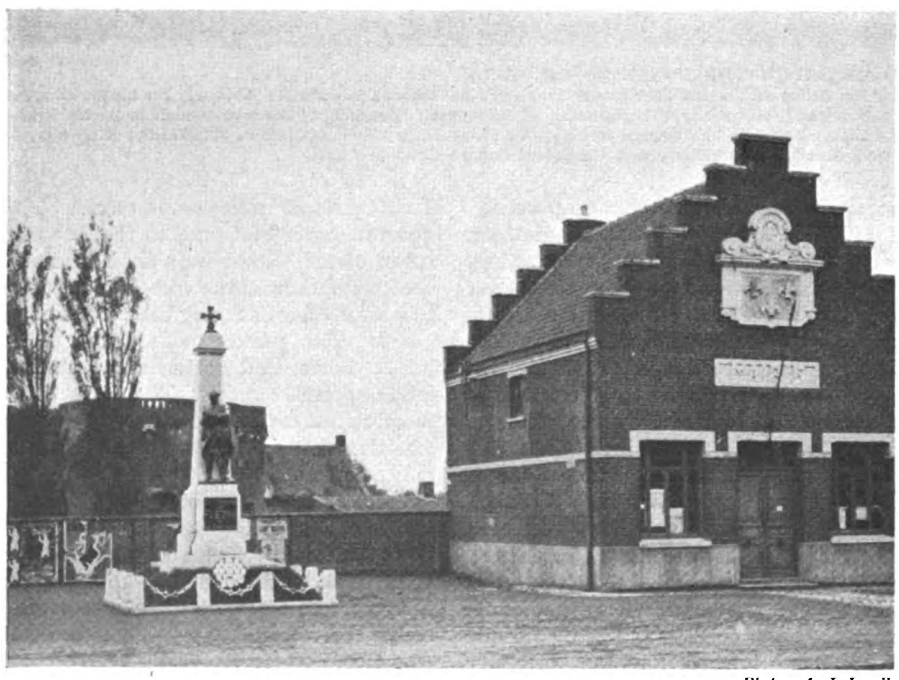

Photo: A. J. Insall.

FLÊTRE'S LITTLE MAIRIE

The village just escaped capture in the Battle of the Lys (April 9th—29th, 1918). The enemy line at the peak of his advance passed from close to St. Jans Cappel to the north-eastern corner of the Forêt de Nieppe, thus including Meteren, the next village eastward on the Bailleul—Cassel road, but missing Flêtre by about 3 km. In this view of the Mairie and War Memorial, note, over the coat-of-arms, the Croix de Guerre awarded to the village.

On the evening of February 27th, the cavalry rode into Aziziya—the place where Townshend had concentrated before his ill-fated dash for Baghdad sixteen months before. There were still Turks in the village, and shots were exchanged in the dark, but by morning the place was clear of enemy.

We were now fifty-five miles by road from Kut but, owing to the many bends, the distance by river was at least double. Hitherto, by performing miracles of sleight of hand, those responsible for supply and transport had contrived to keep the force in food and ammunition. Sir George MacMunn now sought out General Maude and warned him that a few days' halt had become an imperative necessity if the army was to avoid outrunning its supplies.

There was some doubt, too, as to the policy of the Home Government, and whether a further advance to Baghdad would be permitted. Whitehall did not wish to be responsible for another Ctesiphon.

But the private soldier had no doubts. Both Tommy and Sepoy felt that they were better men than the Turk and, under General Maude's leadership, were

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Photo: A. J. Insall.

A CORNER OF BERTANGLES

Two pictures of this village on the Amiens—Doullens road appeared on pages 516 and 517. The interesting photograph reproduced here shows (both sides of road) the buildings which once constituted R.F.C. and R.A.F. orderly-rooms. The aerodromes have utterly vanished, but these rooms might have been vacated yesterday. Bertangles is a spot hallowed in the eyes of airmen of both sides, for here was buried in April, 1918, one of the War's greatest air aces, Baron von Richthofen.

prepared to follow their enemy half across Asia if need be.

In the end, General Maude received, if not an order, at least a pretty plain hint that he could go on and exploit his success to the fullest possible extent.

On March 6th General MacMunn was able to guarantee that he could keep the army in food and ammunition for the next bound, which was to take them to Baghdad and beyond.

The Cavalry Division broke camp at dawn and took the road that leads north along the river-bank.

It's Hard to Part——

The troops had begun to shake down to the ways of open warfare. After over a year in the trenches, the first moves had been cumbrous and slow. Trench-warfare induces a cautious and methodical habit of mind: once on the move, with a beaten enemy in front, speed becomes essential and boldness pays.

It is extraordinary how personal belongings accumulate during a period of trench-warfare. In a civilised theatre of war, such as France, this is more understandable. Without going to the drastic lengths of "borrowing" from an R.E. dump, there was always some kind of material to be "scrounged" and pressed into the service of making life a trifle more comfortable. But Mesopotamia was different. Except for some scrub on the river bank, which turned out on examination to be the raw material of liquorice, the country round Kut was completely barren.

Burying Old Iron

However, the age-old instinct to hoard was not to be denied. The farrier of the 14th Battery had a pretty taste in old iron, out of which he used to make, not only horseshoes, but innumerable other articles. When the move came, he lovingly buried his stock of old shell cases, the tyres of broken wheels, and shoes of dead horses—"as nice a lot of iron as you ever saw, sir"—in the fond hope of being able later to send back a waggon to fetch them.

A Scot in the Black Watch had caught and tamed a young tortoise, which had been his constant companion for a year in the Sannaiyat trenches. He carried it in his haversack for days before finally abandoning it at the end of a particularly long and tiring march.

When the force left Aziziya, some of the field batteries still had a few chickens, which had adapted themselves to the nomadic life. One old hen, the property of a limber-gunner, travelled in a bucket slung under the gun. At every halt she emerged, shook herself, and pecked about for what food she could scratch out of the inhospitable soil. When the whistle blew to mount and move on again, she ran squawking to her bucket, in mortal dread of being left behind. Throughout the march to Baghdad she never failed to provide her owner with a fresh egg daily.

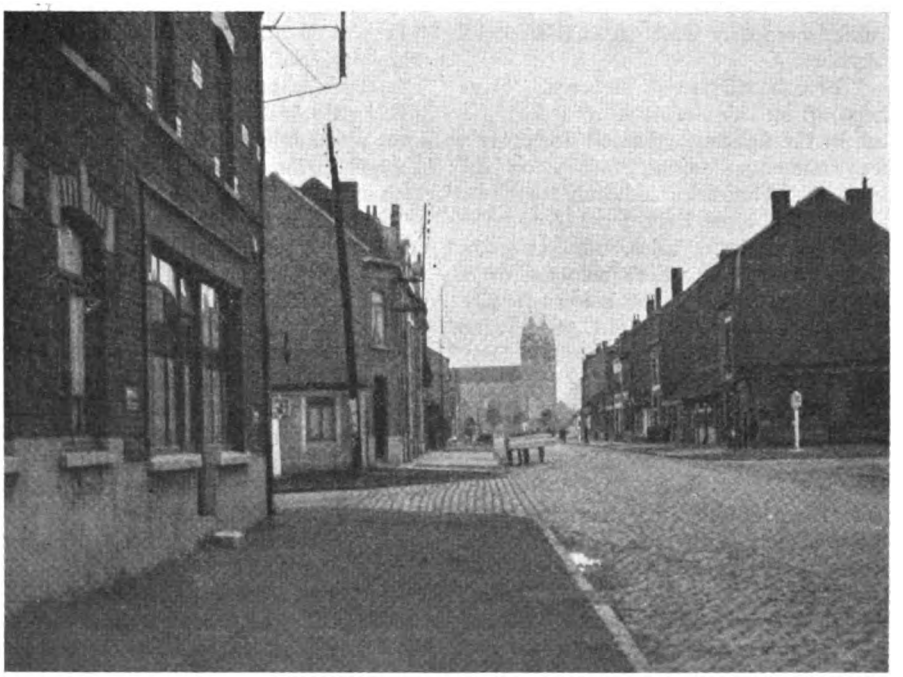

Photo: A. J. Insall.

MAIN STREET AND CHURCH, MERVILLE

Merville, like Bertangles, was a famous R.F.C. centre during the War. On April 11th, 1918, during the Battle of the Lys, the 50th Division was forced back on to Merville and to a point west of it; nor was the little town retaken until August 19th. Headquarters of the Indian Corps in October, 1914, and autumn, 1915, a railhead until May, 1915, and a billeting and hospital centre 1915—1918, Merville has had a full War history.

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CHAPTER LVI

MEMORIES XI.—SOME OLD SOLDIERS LOOK BACK

Of the men of 1914–18 who served on one or more of the various fronts, there must be few who did not at one time or another meet adventure face to face. In previous chapters belonging to this series the writers have, in every case, been men whose experiences were rich and varied. Here a number of men combine to contribute a chapter of sidelights on the conflict, which, short as they are, will be recognised as genuine by every man who served his country overseas.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER has inspired a great number of ex-service men to contribute War memories, written from personal experience in plain, soldierly language. Space permits only of a selection here, but these remarkable documents have been passed to the Official Historian of the Great War for inclusion among his archives, from which the histories of the campaigns are compiled.

Shootin' round Corners

An ex-sergeant of the 2nd Black Watch, 7th Meerut Division, I.E.F. "A"—hon. sec. of the Black Watch Pilgrimage to Belgium and France, 1936—recalls incidents both grave and gay. During the German attack on the Indian Division, November 23rd, 1914, No. 16 Platoon of his battalion was nearest the Indian company which retired from its trenches.

"British rifle fire," he says, "was kept up on the Germans, and during a lull in the fighting we stood down for a few moments, leaving sentries on the firestep. Almost immediately there was a shout: 'Here they come!' and the usual scramble for rifles. One sergeant picked up a rifle which belonged to a lance-corporal, the latter being left with one with a damaged foresight. Seeing the Germans still advancing, and feeling annoyed that he did not appear to be hitting any, he shouted to the sergeant: 'Hey, sergeant, gie me ma ain rifle, ye're better at shootin' roond corners than me!'"

At Amettes one of the company cooks required eggs for his personal use. Being busy, he asked a comrade to fetch some, telling him to ask for "oofs." "Oofs?" queried the man. "Oofs? And what the h—— dae ye ca' horses' feet?"

In the trenches in front of Festubert they sometimes had difficulty in getting water fit for "drumming up," and usually scooped it from the trench bottom for this purpose. "One time, just after a little scrap on November 23rd, 1914, the water was of dubious appearance. One wit drummed up a nice canteen of tea, whilst the officer sat on the firestep, seemingly in need of refreshment. The wit quietly looked at his steaming canteen, whimsically glanced at the officer, and said: 'Could you go a drink of hot tea, sir?' The officer seemed delighted, and accepting, proclaimed it delicious. 'Does it taste good?' asked the wit. On receiving an affirmative reply, he added: 'Well, sir, if it disna poison you it'll no poison me!'"

Birds of a Feather? . . .

"D" Company had an urgent call to support the Seaforths against a German attack about the end of December, 1914. "It was a disastrous night for the company, and many were killed. It was dark when they arrived back to billets the following evening, and all were absolutely done for want of rest. A good ration of rum was issued, and soon all was quietness.

"One chap by the name of McD—— could not discover a comfortable place to lie down, but, espying a pig-sty, he quickly got the pig ousted and lay down in the warm nest it had left. In the morning, while McD——— still slept the sleep of the just, there was much merriment amongst a party looking at the stye. There lay McD———, and old Grumpie the pig cuddling in at his back, both quite oblivious that they were the centre of attraction!"

At the Battle of Aubers Ridge on May 9th, 1915, Capt. G. C. S. McLeod was in command of No. 4 Company. "He was a born leader, and would not ask for anything to be done which he would not do himself. At the commencement of the attack he was hit through the stomach, and, attended by his servant, was propped up in a corner of the trench. The attack was a complete failure, and on my entering the trench from No Man's Land some hours later, Capt. McLeod recognised me, and, with a smile belying the pallor of his face, looked at his watch and muttered 'Only five minutes to go now, W———.'

"I felt the water coming to my eyes as I left him, and was sorry to hear a few days later that this brave officer had died. That was the type of officer prevalent in the Black Watch in those days, and even one casualty was a personal loss to each and all of the battalion we loved.

"A few months later, two companies of the 2nd Black Watch went over the top to attempt to take a position where the Dehra Dun Brigade had failed a few hours previously. Our attack was at a standstill within three minutes, and out of the 450 who went over, 270 were casualties. The least movement by a wounded man was a signal for a burst of machine-gun fire from the German lines; I sampled this myself when I made a movement to dress my wound while lying there amongst the dead, and Mr. Jerry politely put a burst of machine-gun fire through my haversack. I remained motionless, and although my position seemed hopeless, there flashed across my mind Capt. Wauchope's order, 'Never fire on men in misfortune'; at that moment I was proud to belong to the nation that bred me."

The Last Straw

The "Glory Hole," near Festubert, a part of our trench about five yards from a German sap head, was a death-trap and the scene of much grim humour in October, November, and December, 1914. "One soldier whom we knew by the patronym of 'Horse's Face' fell asleep on the firestep, and a wit could not resist the opportunity of placing a bunch of straw in his mouth as he snored. When he awoke he was so annoyed that he seized his rifle and

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SOUTH OF ARRAS

Then and Now

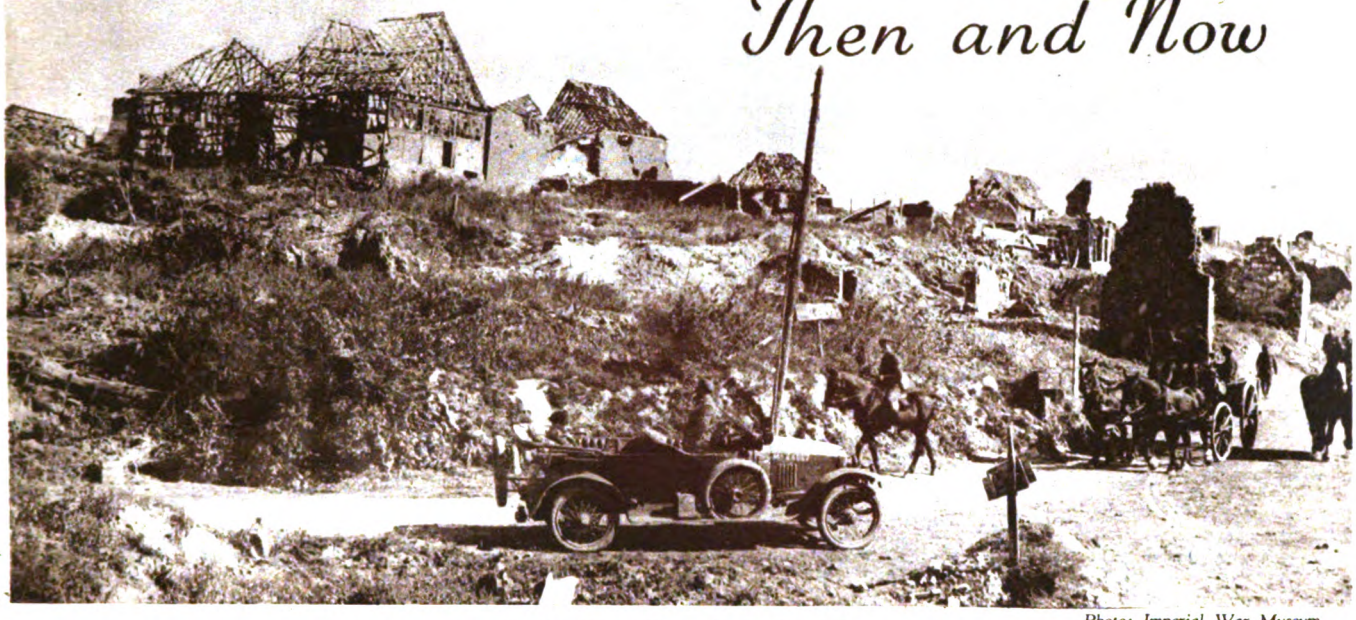

Photo: Imperial War Museum

HORSES AND A CAR—THEN

A photograph taken at St. Léger (on the Sensée 9 km. due north of Bapaume) after its recapture by the Guards Division on August 24th, 1918. During the German retirement to the Hindenburg Line, in 1917, we had reached by March 19th a line running through this village. Almost exactly a year later—March 21st, 1918—the enemy returned, attacking our 34th Division from the south-west (that is, almost from behind) about Croisilles. On March 23rd the 31st Division distinguished itself at St. Léger by driving off the attacks of two German divisions with heavy loss to the attackers.

Photo: A. J. Insall

HORSES AND A CAR—NOW

This is a unique "Then and Now" pair of pictures, in that the "Now" photograph, as well as the "Then," was taken just after a skirmish involving bloodshed. The group of persons in the background of the later view are strikers and their sympathisers; and as soon as he had taken his photograph involving them, our photographer found himself surrounded by cyclist-police of uninviting demeanour. However, he saved the situation—both for himself and for TWENTY YEARS AFTER—by hastily enquiring the way to another part of the former firing-line.

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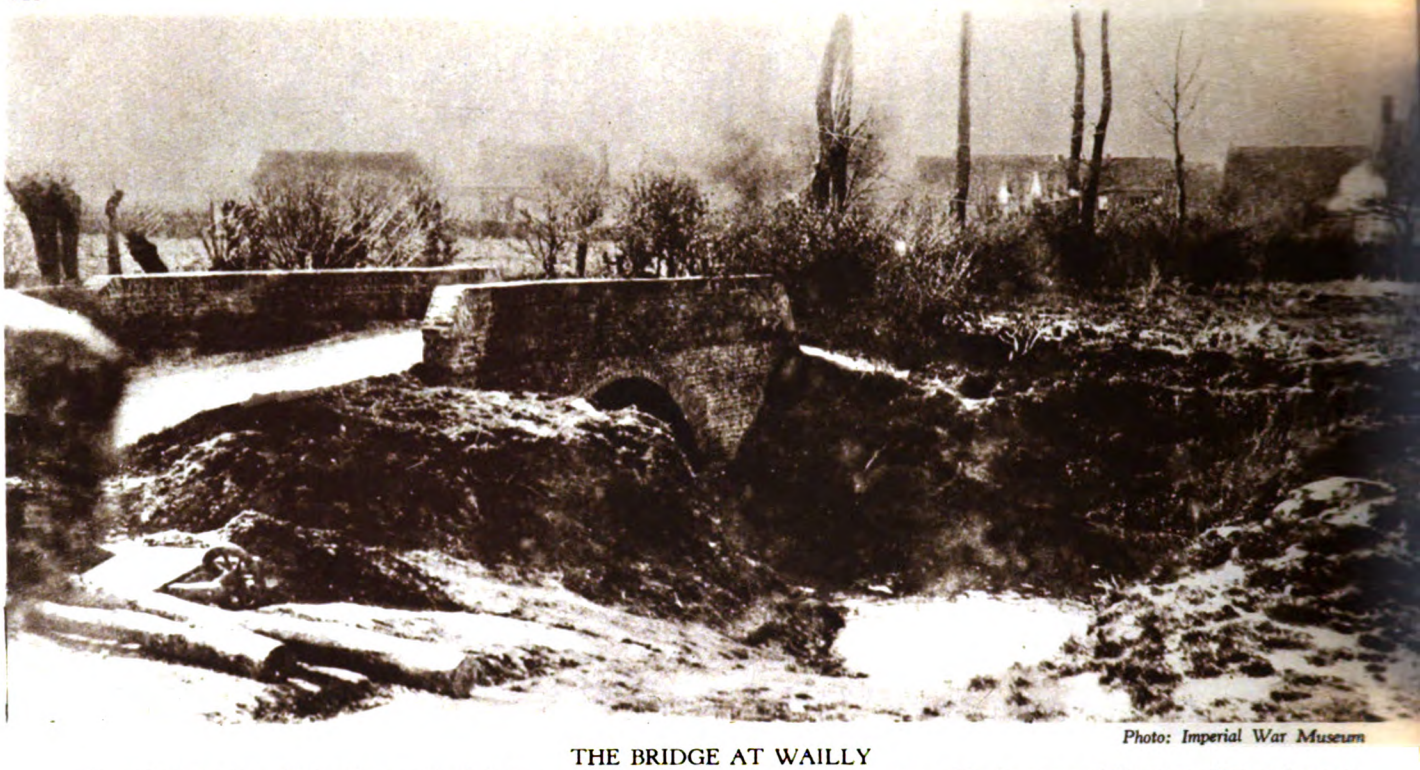

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE BRIDGE AT WAILLY

Several illustrations of this village on the Crinchon, south-west of Arras, have already appeared in the pages of TWENTY YEARS AFTER. The bridge shown in these views must have been crossed by many a reader during the long period—almost the whole of the War—when Wailly was a back-area settlement. Observe the astonishing resemblance between the two photographs. Except for the ubiquitous fencing of ex-military barbed wire visible in the modern version, the pictures might be changed about and no one could detect the anachronism.

Photo: Keystone

WITH SCARCELY A DIFFERENCE

Wailly is the type of place which was wont to resound month in and month out to the thud of heavy shells arriving from the enemy's lines, and frequently to the bark of our anti-aircraft guns. Looking at these photographs, one can almost hear now the sound of the wardens of the skies, and see the men strolling out from their rest-billets to crane their necks skyward. Sure enough, high among the clouds or against the blue heaven they would see him—the anxious German turning and twisting in his endeavour to break away from the little white puffs which encircled him; and constantly small, screaming pieces of shell would bury themselves in the ground.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

LETTING SLEEPING LOGS DIE . . .

The German is seldom a man of half-measures, and never was the German soldier who fought in the Great War more thorough than when conducting a retreat. Even in his precipitate withdrawal from position after position in late 1918, he spared no pains to delay and irk our troops by every means possible; and his systematic retirement of eighteen months earlier was a masterpiece of painstaking efficiency. Here, taken in May, 1917, is a photograph of the little River Cojeul near St. Martin-sur-Cojeul, showing trees felled by the retiring enemy to remove every vestige of cover, and to afford him bridges.

Photo: A. J. Insall

ST. MARTIN-SUR-COJEUL TO-DAY

On the north bank of the stream 8 km. south-east of Arras, this village lies between Héninel and Hénin. Upon the German retirement, Manchester and Liverpool troops of the 30th Division occupied St. Martin on April 9th, carrying the line forward between it and Chapelle de Feuchy on the Arras–Cambrai road. The village fell again to the enemy the following spring, and on August 24th, 1918, was entered by the 52nd Division, following the latter's capture of Hénin. To-day there are at St. Martin-sur-Cojeul two British cemeteries, known as those of Cojeul and St. Martin Calvaire. Together they contain the graves of 546 United Kingdom fallen.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

MINE-CRATER IN BOIRY-BECQUERELLE

Allusion has already been made (page 843) to the variety of " Boiry's " to be found within a comparatively small distance of Arras. Boiry-Becquerelle is situated just east of the Arras–Péronne road, on the secondary route which follows the Cojeul past Hénin, St. Martin, and Héninel, to Wancourt. It is 8 km. from Arras. This view of a mine-crater in front of wrecked houses is of interest for the German direction-signs. British, German, and French all adopted the same style of sign-painting, but the expert could diagnose the authorship of any given sign by slight peculiarities in the lettering.

Photo: A. J. Insall

A TYPICAL SCENE

The ornate building in this modern view of Boiry-Becquerelle is no more than a farmstead, and is typical of the larger farms set up in the former battle-areas. The horses in the foreground are also characteristic of the type now, as before the War, so extensively bred in France : a type fiery but strong. Although there is little to indicate it, this scene is the same as that shown in the upper picture. The latter was taken in March, 1917, following the German retirement. After the usual reversal of things a year later, Boiry-Becquerelle was recaptured by troops of the IV Corps on August 23rd, 1918.

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bayonet and was about to fight the jokers. Unfortunately, the Germans heard the noise and sent over a couple of bombs, one of which blew our comrade to atoms. We collected his remains in a sandbag and buried him in the trench—and nearly wept our eyes out in doing so.

" In this ' Glory Hole ' we had many casualties. On one occasion, we were just into it from rest billets at La Plantin, and were in humorous spirit. The French folk had fled and left La Plantin to the mercy of our chaps. Here we discovered some women's underwear, and it did not take much enticement to don this under the kilt.

" One night the ' Glory Hole ' was blown in, and communication cut off with the left of the company. Five men had to crawl over the back of the blown-in trench to establish communication, but were caught by enemy bombs, and none survived. For days they lay out there under the eye of the Germans and ourselves. Distinctly showing under their kilts were the white-frilled linen garments which had been the cause of such innocent merriment so short a time previously.

" During the time we manned the ' Glory Hole ' the Germans, unknown to us, had been mining underneath. We were relieved by the 1st H.L.I. near the end of December, and a few nights afterwards the H.L.I. were blown up. Pipe-Sergt. D. Buchan was wounded, and, seeing Germans bayoneting the wounded, he opened fire with his revolver until he received the blow which passed him to the majority."

During the Last 100 Days

A reader who served three years in the line with the 12th London Regt. describes a nerve-racking exploit during the last hundred days : " My regiment had been facing Albert, and working sectors southwards automatically until we had crossed the Amiens—Albert road, up to the time we were due to relieve an American regiment at the beginning of August, 1918. On relief, instructions were that we start wiring straight away, but this was impossible throughout the night owing to machine-gun and shell fire. As was usually the case, an uncanny silence prevailed at stand-to next morning—an indication of further ill-fortune to come.

" The Colonel came along and remarked on the strange peacefulness, to which I replied that there was something unusual afoot. He said he was uneasy, and I volunteered to go out and have a look as soon as it got dark. ' Too long to wait,' he said. ' Don't you fancy going out there now ? Think it over for a moment.' I did think it over, and remembered the accuracy of German snipers. Candidly, I thought it was asking for trouble, but went along and had a word with my captain, who told me to please myself. I told him I would go straight away. He ordered me to pick the men I wanted and pass the word along to both flanks.

" With a bomb in each pocket, a revolver and respirator, and only one other man to observe my movements from a hundred yards distant, the ' patrol ' was lifted flat on to the parapet, and slowly, by rolling and worming, safely negotiated our scanty wire. Silence still, and no movement in the German line.... Why didn't they shoot and get the job over ? Probably wanted to take me prisoner, I thought, for I knew that a shot would not miss at two hundred yards, had they wished to stop my ' gallop ' then.

" The ground being open and without cover in front, I decided to make for an old trench on my left. This needed a lot of care, for I realised that it might be used as a forward German post. I was right ; there were two occupants,

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

TENSION

One of the most nerve-trying tasks which fell to the lot of the Great War soldier—keeping watch in a sap-head. All alone, as it were, in the midst of No Man's Land, the sentry, with rifle ready to hand, crouches at the end of the gallery, his eyes straying alternately from his watch to the mirror of the carefully-camouflaged periscope. The man shown here belongs to the 1/4th East Lancashires and the sap-head which he is guarding is one at Givenchy. The date is January 28th, 1918.

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amongst other evidence of enemy occupation. It was khaki which first took my eye, then field-grey: a dead German and a dead Australian, with the latter's fist, even in death, resting on the German's jaw.

Not Meant For Him

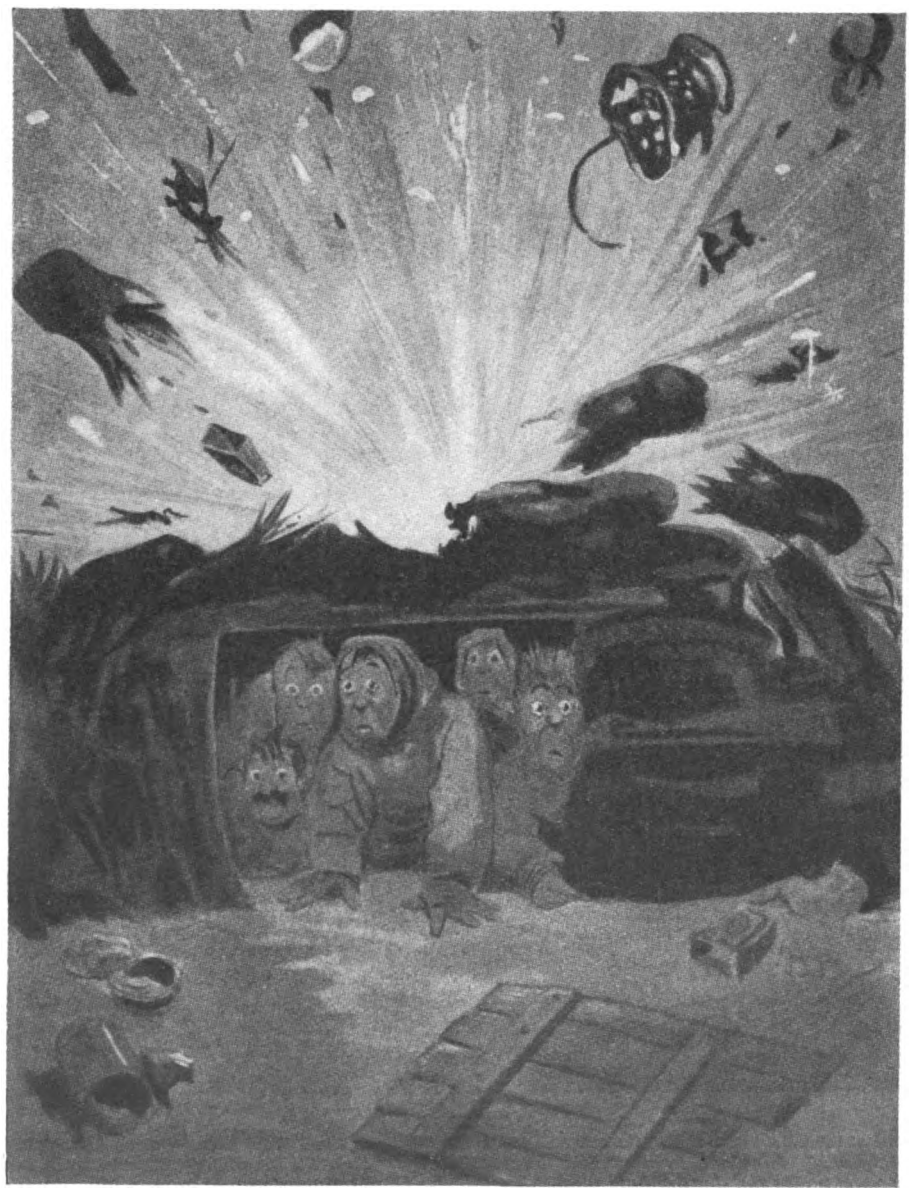
"A few bullets now began to swish about from the left, but I knew they were from a distance and not meant for me. I subsequently found that another patrol was being fired on, and saw them scuttle back to their trenches, but did not realise then that the bullets, as well as the men, were British.

"With a hundred yards still to cover before reaching the German line, I continued steadily, and eventually rolled into it, expecting a few big Fritzes to grab me as I did so. When I got my breath and took count of my surroundings I realised that the birds had flown. Nowhere, not even on the next ridge over Morlancourt, could I see a soul. I thereupon signalled my follower back, and cautiously retraced my way. We both got back, and were not long in reporting the facts."

A private of the 9th (S) Royal Fusiliers, 12th Division—formerly a police-constable—gives an account of "one of the most unusual actions of the War" in Scabbard Trench, near Oppy Wood: "We—the 8th and 9th—went in to attack, but when we arrived Jerry attacked and got in first, so we had to get him out before zero and go after him when he had got home; but we couldn't get him out in time, and when the barrage came down there was utter confusion. Some went over, some were engaged with Germans in No Man's Land, while others were clearing the remnants out of our trench.

"While some of our men were fighting in the German trenches, Germans were fighting in ours. We carried our objectives in the end, and, after we were relieved, we assembled in the 'Triangle' near Arras for Roll Call. There were only a few to tell the tale, and our C.O., Col. Overton, burst into tears when he saw what was left of the battalion."

An engagement in front of Oppy is also described vividly by a private of the 1st Bedfordshire Regt.: "Our Company, 'B,' met with little if any opposition, and it was not long before we reached our objective. 'A' Company, on our left, was held up for a time by a body of machine-gunners, who were determined to hold out at all costs. Here the Company Sergt.-Major issued orders that his men should lie down until reserves came up, and then with a determined charge they cleared the trench at the point of the bayonet.



From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather.

"Where did that one go to?"

Near Oppy Wood

"As I rushed across the open, a German suddenly emerged from a deserted trench, and, on catching sight of me, immediately threw up his hands and shouted 'Mercy, Kamerad!' I never saw such terror depicted on a man's countenance. After being satisfied that he was completely disarmed, I sent him back to our rear.

"The sight which met our eyes as we neared the German lines beggars description. Trenches were battered beyond recognition, while trench stores, equipment, rifles, etc., lay scattered and torn in all directions. The trenches of which we now took possession were about forty or fifty yards in front of Oppy Wood, just outside the village. Here we halted for a rest, and consolidated, remaining until the evening, when we again advanced and entered the Wood itself. Soon after our arrival it commenced to rain in torrents, turning the newly-ploughed-up earth into a thick, sticky mud, and making the work of entrenching much more difficult."

Oppy Wood—which seems to have left a deep impression on all who fought there—is also touched on by a corporal of the 4th E. Yorks T.F., who says he was attached to the 10th Commercial Battalion for this "stunt":

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" We took up position in shell-holes about fifteen yards in front of wood at about 1 a.m.; German sentry shouted '*Halte!*' For five hours lay in shell-holes, subjected to severe bombardment; Verey lights dropping in holes and burning us. Then attack. . . . German wired heavily on parapet, wire found mostly uncut. We took front line but fell back later, finding Germans had support line connected to front line underground. Remainder of day spent in shell-holes from ten to twenty yards in front of German front line.

" Our commander killed on reaching my shell-hole; sniper blew his steel helmet ten feet high as he was standing to speak to me. Sniper occupied position in front tree, centre of wood; kept us down all day, assisted by his artillery. Saw large party on left being taken prisoners by Germans during day. On night approaching, commenced joining up shell-holes. At roll-call two mornings after, about forty men remained out of over one thousand."

A Canadian's Story

A Canadian of the 6th Victoria Rifles, 9th Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division, describes an attack at a position known as the " China Wall," in the Ypres Salient, in June, 1916: " Everything here was in a terrible state, with piled-up dead, and we had to crawl over them in order to proceed. We hadn't gone far when the enemy must have spotted a movement in the trench and started plastering it and everywhere around with whizz-bangs. In our confusion some of us got into a field on the left and crawled into shell-holes. Two others and myself crawled around this field dragging our extra ammunition and also an apron full of bombs.

" It was now broad daylight, and we daren't move much, as Heine commanded the higher ground on the Menin Road. He raked us for all that time, and I began to ask myself: 'Well, how long will it be?' We were lifted up with every explosion, until I nearly went out of my mind with 'nerves.' I gather we must have been some eighteen hours in that field. Finally, when night fell on June 4th, we managed to get into a trench and there met an officer who gave us directions and told us to proceed along another trench, called Regent Street. At last we came to an outpost called Yeomanry Post, a little to the right of the Culvert at Hooge.

" We located the O.C. of the 42nd Canadian Highlanders, and asked to be guided to our unit. He told us to go and lie in a trench till darkness came. Here we fell asleep. A small shell hit the parados, burying us all and knocking us out. A massive, talony hand seemed to be dragging me into a bottomless pit, but finally I struggled free and came to with one of my mates calling, not me, but another Jack. In the vague mist I answered him, and found I couldn't move; I was almost completely buried, but after a struggle managed to get free and dig out my friend. My reward was a Blighty on the head, and severe shell-concussion causing temporary blindness for several days."

From the drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather.

KEEPING HIS HAND IN

Private Smith, the company bomber, formerly " Shino," the popular juggler, frequently causes considerable anxiety to his platoon.

The Menu Curtailed

Our Canadian friend has this recollection of bivouacking in rain and mud at the Brickfields, the other side of Albert: " Our cooks had been toasting Bacchus very successfully; one of them was standing in the morass with one muddy boot in a pan of beans and the other in a pan of bacon, and dishing out helpings in this manner! "

In a communication trench called Davidson Street, at Sanctuary Wood, he and a mate occupied a small dug-out about April, 1916. " I had just cooked a tin of Maconochie and got a nice mess-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A HORRID TANGLE

The appalling mass of débris here illustrated has already graced our pages once—a slightly different view of it appearing on page 390. It represents all that was left by April 21st, 1917, of the Château de Coulaincourt (or Caulaincourt, as frequently spelt); and the purpose of reintroducing it is to contrast it with the exceptionally fine view of the modern château reproduced opposite. The ruined building is characteristic of the state in which the cautious Germans left anything and everything of military worth as they retired.

tin full and steaming coffee ready when a shell hit the opposite side of the trench and buried us. Finally they made a passage, and the officer yelled in: 'Is anybody hurt?' 'No, damn it,' was the reply, 'but the sons of bitches have spoiled my ruddy dinner!'"

A night of ordeal in the capture of Jerusalem is recalled by a sergeant of the 2/13th London Regt., 60th Division: "The attack of the 180th on Deir Yesin was carried out at 5 p.m., and the brigade spent a most miserable and uneasy night on the exposed hills, without rations, fires, or bivouacs, while the keen wind searched through light summer clothing.

"Men paced up and down to keep warm, or crept beneath the shelter of heaps of stones. Many fell asleep from exhaustion and had to be roused because of the danger of frost-bite. It was a terrible experience for the wounded, some of whom must have succumbed to exposure, although the medical orderlies worked hard to bring them in."

The famous Canadian Crab Crawl Tunnel, in the Ypres Salient, is mentioned by a member of the King's Liverpool Regt. (Lord Derby's Pals, 18th), 30th Division, who was wounded three times in that area; he refers to "the canteen, practically in the front line," and the field gun, "the most forward in the Salient." If he remembers aright, "one of the entrances (to the tunnel) was not far from Sanctuary Wood; it had electric lights burning day and night, and was of huge size."

He recalls also the China Wall, which ran alongside Zillebeke Lake, past the notice-board "No Bombing for Fish"; and Hell Fire Corner with the dead mule and water-cart in May, 1917. "My mates and I thought that the men who got that gun up so far and managed to fire the rounds they did—and they got everything back from Jerry in return—really did a wonderful thing."

After the First Gas Attack

A man of the 1/5th The King's Own Loyal Lancaster Regt., commenting on the first German gas attack in the Second Battle of Ypres, April, 1915, says: "We came out of Polygon into Ypres, and on being shelled out, took to the fields and bivouacked round about the Summer House. During the day I went up into St. Jean in search of coffee. At that time not a tile was out of place, and all the inhabitants were there; but in every farmyard and around every pump were dozens of Algerians trying to drink water. Many had their tongues lolling out, others were all turned green,

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lots were dead or writhing in their final agonies. The strange thing was that no one seemed to know what had happened, and for lack of interpreters the news spread slowly."

Later this writer's battalion headed up to La Belle Alliance Farm: "We dug in in front of this, and had View Farm just in front of us. The peasants had gone, but the cattle were still in the barns, and alive until, during the morning, a number of shells dropped in and finished them off. 'I had my dinner off a hastily-cut piece of sucking-pig rump, cooked over a tin of dubbin with a rag for wick."

Of the operations on the 23rd, he says: "We went on through St. Jean, where hundreds of bicycles lay derelict, made in the direction of Wieltje, and, turning left into the fields, prepared to line a ditchy hedge. Jerry's balloons were up, and he had our range. All we could do was flop down and hope for the best, whilst the Gurkhas came through us and advanced to a wood at the other side of the field to root out Jerry, who had made a real nest of machine guns.

"The German artillery shelled the wood unmercifully, for Jerry feared he was going to lose it; and after about half-an-hour some of the Gurkhas began to file back with their left hands all jagged and cut. On our asking them the reason, they said it was on account of their grabbing Jerry's bayonet as he took the defensive against their well-wielded kukri knives. . . .

"At the back of Potijze Wood I saw an 18-pounder battery with three guns out of action, all the crews flattened out, and the last gun, with a lump out of one wheel, being served by a wounded 'non.-com.' and an artilleryman. It was a memorable sight."

Gas-cylinders and Ammonal

One of the 10th Lincolns, 34th Division, recalls dangerous fatigues, as well as grim fighting, in the neighbourhood of Albert: "The night we were to carry gas-cylinders into the front lines put the wind up most of us, for we were told to remove every stitch of equipment and have our gas helmets—the old phenol-hexamine hoods—pinned on our chests.

"Two men to a cylinder, we carried them by means of a pole threaded through each end, and no one was allowed to stop or change shoulders except at stated intervals, when word was passed down. All went off well, in spite of painful shoulders and desultory shrapnel; but we feared the uselessness

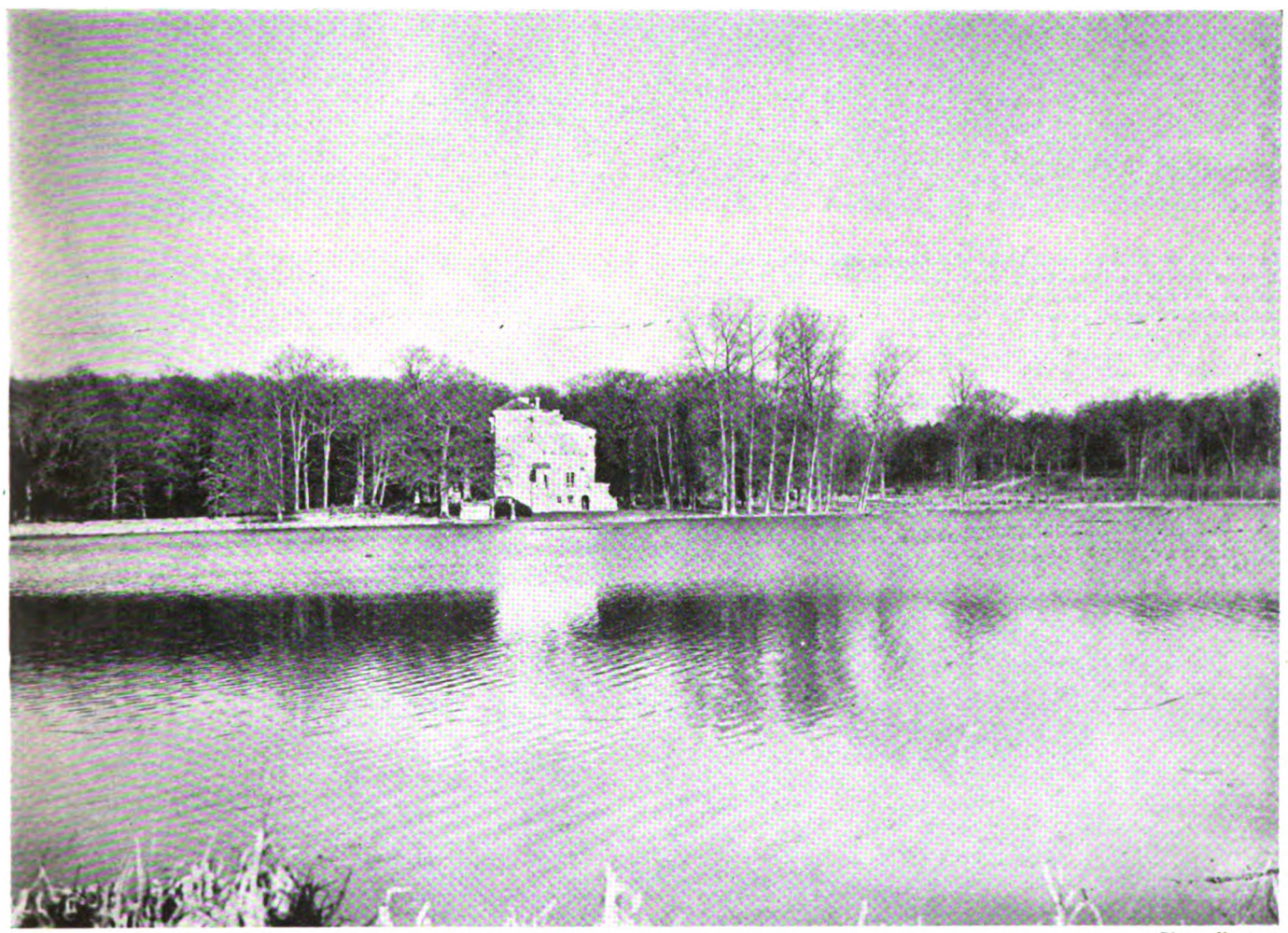

Photo: Keystone.

A VISION OF LOVELINESS

Coulaincourt, it will be recalled, lies on the Omignon between Péronne and St. Quentin, and experienced what may be termed the normal succession of events—occupation by us in April, 1917, renewed German domination the following March, and final capture on behalf of its legitimate owners during our Victory Advance. This charming view of the reconstructed château shows the building from the far side of its private lake. At the time of the old building's destruction—which extended to every stable, outhouse, and garden bower—lake and park were littered not only with ordinary brickwork, woodwork, and masonry, but with carved lions' heads, broken statues, massive vases, and all manner of shattered finery.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

BOOTY

Like the retainers of some mediæval robber-baron, these British Tommies drive a "borrowed" flock of sheep before them as they retire near Verneuil on May 29th, 1918. Verneuil is in the neighbourhood of Soissons—far to the south of the British battle-area as generally accepted—and this photograph was taken just after the opening of the Third Battle of the Aisne.

RUM

In keeping with the piratical tenor of the upper illustration, we show here an issue of rum in process, the recipients being Royal Field Artillerymen of the 55th Division. The picture comes from the Béthune area, where it was taken on April 10th, 1918. At that time the German offensive on the Lys was in full swing—the 10th, indeed, being the eve of the issue of Haig's famous "backs-to-the-wall" order.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CANADIANS AT CARDS

A strictly off-duty scene photographed at Daméry in late August, 1918. This village, together with Fransart and Parvillers, had been captured by the Canadians, fighting in co-operation with the French on the left of the French First Army, on August 15th. Heavy counter-attacks were beaten off the following day, and during the two days' fighting 260 prisoners were taken.

TOILET SCENE

Lewis gunners grew accustomed to close shaves, and here is a member of a Lewis-gun section at work with the razor in a post near Robecq, April 17th, 1918. A successful British advance was made in this area five days later, and was continued on the 23rd. Fighting also occurred on May 13th and July 18th. Robecq lies where the Béthune—Hazebrouck road crosses the River Clarence, 8 km. south-west of Merville.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

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of the helmets had a cylinder been broken open.

"On other occasions we carried ammonal up to the mouth of a mine-shaft, in square wooden boxes, each containing 50 lb., two being nailed together with narrow strips of wood which served as handles. On the first night we were in a trench behind the château, awaiting the order to move off, when we were startled by a shower of 5·9's, and a near-stampede followed. Fortunately, those in front moved off briskly, and those behind lost no time in following. The boxes were delivered in record time! . . .

"When the mine did go up, its tons of explosive caused the earth to sway as does the plate of a weighing-machine. Looking over the parapet, one saw a huge wall rise to some three hundred feet, composed of chalk, mud, dust, timber, etc., with here and there a German."

Of the Bazentin and Mametz sector, a friend who has recently revisited it said afterwards to the writer: "Believe it or not, that district *still* smells!"

The Rats' Rallying-ground

Suzanne village must have been "the rallying-ground for all the rats in France," thinks one correspondent who wrote the *Official History of the 206th Field Coy., R.E.* "If anyone walked across the farmyard in the night, he was sure to meet them in hundreds; in fact, it was impossible to keep from squelching them under foot, and their squealing was most alarming."

Concert-parties are the theme of an officer who played "5 ft. 11½ in. of so-called girl" in the 40th Divisional Party, started at Nœux-les-Mines by Capt. Nicholas Hannen, and whose photograph, *not* in uniform, hung in the A.A. & Q.M.G's. Office! On the night he said good-bye to the 40th and transferred to the 74th, the Germans bombed St. Omer and a stage-carpenter was killed.

"A week before the Armistice, the 74th was instructed to perform before an audience of several hundred men and officers, in a village on a crossroads that was nightly shelled. Naturally, I objected. However, the R.E.'s made the hall light-proof, and we gave the show. Just after the interval the shells came, and fell roughly just outside each corner

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SURREY YEOMANRY IN COULAINCOURT

A photograph taken on the same date as the war-time view of the château, and showing some of the British troops who were then hard on the heels of the Germans. According to a British newspaper correspondent who visited Coulaincourt on April 22nd, 1917—and therefore, it must be admitted in fairness to the enemy, wrote very much in the heat of the moment—neither village nor château could have had the smallest military value, and their destruction extended even to the rifling of vaults and the opening of coffins. Foremost among the tombs were those belonging to the princely family of Coulaincourt, whose head was Marquis of Coulaincourt and Duke of Vicenza, and whose feminine members had included ladies-in-waiting to the Empresses Josephine and Marie-Louise.

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Photo: Keystone.

COULAINCOURT CHURCH ON A WINTER MORNING

From the shapeless wreckage of Coulaincourt's former church British hands in 1917 rescued and set up for all to see a tablet saying: "Here lies the heart of Anne Josephine Barandier, Marquise de Coulaincourt, Duchesse de Vicenza . . ." etc. This was almost the sole recognisable relic of the pulverised château, about which the journalist to whom allusion has already been made writes luridly of the reports given him by refugees concerning the Germans' wholesale removal of priceless furnishings, tapestries, pictures, and ornaments, until only the bare shell of the once splendid structure remained.

of the building. On instructions from the senior officer present, I cleared the hall quietly, and the show went on—the last turn, to a nearly empty hall, being a conjurer. That theatre was closed next day."

One of those human little incidents which rarely get into war histories is described by a Canadian Sergt.-Major of the 33rd Battery, C.F.A. It happened while they were at Passchendaele in the autumn of 1917. "We had a young chap from Nova Scotia affectionately known as 'Blue Nose' or 'Herring Choker.' We were packing ammunition into Passchendaele, and at Kanas Crossing a young Australian officer was stationed, to break up the convoy into smaller parties of twenty horses, with a fifty-yard interval between sections.

"Canada's Gift to the Empire!"

"Our 'Blue Nose' friend, knowing that he would be halted and have to lead his section, decided to keep on going. The officer immediately ordered him to stop, calling in a loud voice: 'Stop, that man! Who are you, sir?' Blue Nose, clearing his mouth of tobacco juice, called back over his shoulder: 'Canada's gift to the Empire, sir!'

"The look on the officer's face was priceless, and his retort equally so: 'Those b——— Canadians!' Blue Nose was not paraded for office, as we were able to pacify the officer with a healthy shot of rum—and heaven knows he needed it, for he was soaked to the skin, and on thankless duty."

The Padre and the Lingerie

Many things were done during the War under the guise of humour that in peace-time would be regarded as in bad taste. There was, for instance, the case of the Padre attached to a Scottish unit at rest in Hazebrouck. The battalion was due to go up the line in the morning and a last dinner had been arranged.

The officers' mess was short of glasses and the second-in-command, as Mess President, visited some partially demolished estaminets to see what could be scrounged. He obtained all the glass required and, in addition, looted a very choice set of lingerie.

It so happened that the Padre had gone off on his bicycle to St. Omer, intending to return the same day. The weather broke, it rained in torrents and the Padre decided to stay the night. He arrived back to find his valise packed and ready for the move.

The same afternoon the kit was dumped at the camping ground near Ploegsteert Wood and by accident, seemingly, every officer that could be spared happened to be in the vicinity of the Padre's tent when he began unpacking. A kindly captain helped the Padre to get settled in and presently there was a gasp of well-simulated horror when from the valise the captain drew forth the set of lingerie looted by the major on the previous day.

The Padre was a loved and respected figure in the battalion and he had a keen sense of humour. For a split second he seemed taken aback. Then, with a wistful smile, he murmured, "Oh, it's that wicked major again."

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CHAPTER LVII

THE MINES OF MESSINES

The Battle of Messines stands in little need of introduction. It was one of the few perfect battles of the Great War, and will always be associated with the name of the Commander of the Second Army, Plumer, the general who "never made a mistake." There has been a tendency since the War to criticise this or that commander, but few have ever had aught but praise for the sage leader of the most northerly of the British Armies on the Western Front, the late Lord Plumer of Messines.

On June 7th, 1917, there took place at the southern shoulder of the Ypres Salient one of the most successful battles ever fought during the entire period of trench warfare on the Western Front. For many reasons, indeed, it was a noteworthy action: in the first place, the plan for it had been begun a whole year before it was fought, and consequently had been thought out in minute detail; secondly, the battle was heralded by the firing of the greatest mines employed during the War; and lastly, the casualties were amazingly small in proportion to the result achieved.

A Model Battle

The Battle of Messines in most respects remains a pattern of what can be achieved in trench warfare by careful preparation and by a lavish use of artillery and high explosive. It differed from nearly every one of the greater attacks of the War in that it was treated from the outset as a problem of siege warfare; its management became very largely a matter for artillerymen and engineers. On the other hand, its results, if considerable, were chiefly moral and purely local in nature; it was, in fact, a battle with a limited object. By itself alone, therefore, it could not be conducive to very far-reaching results. That, however, does not detract from its importance, and it remains a model of its type.

The circumstances which led up to the battle originated as far back as 1915—that is, in Sir Douglas Haig's firmly-rooted purpose to drive the Germans back not only from the Ypres Salient, but also, if possible, from the Belgian coast. In 1916, it had become desirable that the first step toward this end should be to deprive the enemy of the great advantage that he derived from the possession of the high ground about Messines and Wytschaete, since from this dominating position he could observe the whole of the ground on the southern side of the Salient. But this intention had of necessity been shelved, owing to the fighting on the Somme. Nevertheless, the Field-Marshal had kept it at the back of his mind, and had even ordered preparations for the battle to be continued throughout 1916.

After the fighting on the Somme had died down, the French Government supplanted General Joffre in the high command of the French armies by General Nivelle, a leader who had originally made his reputation at Verdun. The first act of the new commander was to order a great offensive to be launched in April, 1917, against the Chemin des Dames, the German position which ran to the north of, and parallel to, the River Aisne. To support this stroke, Sir Douglas Haig was asked to

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A MONSTROUS CAVITY

Superlatives fail one in any attempt to describe adequately the tremendous crater of which a portion is shown in this photograph. The chasm marks the result of one of the nineteen mines exploded before our opening attack in the Battle of Messines, June 7th, 1917. The digging of the galleries for these charges, and the extraordinary conditions under which the infantry had to advance as a result of the explosions, are fully dealt with in the accompanying chapter.

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co-operate, and this he did by fighting the Battle of Arras.

Failure of the French

Here General Allenby with his Third Army was sent forward to the attack, and was supported by the First Army at the beginning of April. The results of the first phase of the fighting at Arras were appreciable, and there is no doubt that Haig would gladly have suspended the operations at this early stage. But it was part of the Allied plan that the British should continue their pressure whilst General Nivelle launched no fewer than four armies against the Germans along the Aisne.

The French timed the assault for April 16th. From the very outset their plan was destined to failure. It was based on surprise, and it was not a surprise. The grand attack was shattered by the German machine guns. Still, in spite of this reverse Nivelle struggled on, and gave up his attempt only on May 5th. Shortly afterwards, he in turn was superseded by General Pétain. It was time: so enormous had been the French casualties that the French army was seriously shaken. For months afterwards it remained licking its wounds, while whole divisions were falling into a state which, in not a few cases, ended in mutiny.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

TUNNELLERS AT WORK

Not a Messines photograph, but typical of the work done there: members of the 3rd Australian Tunnelling Company excavating a chamber in the chalk in the Hulluch—Loos subway system, January 30th, 1918. The chalk was hacked out by the miners' picks, and loaded into sacks, which were hauled to the surface and secretly removed by night. The whiteness of the chalk made the work here especially difficult to conceal.

The repercussions of this costly disaster were not only immediate but very far-reaching in their effects on the British effort during the whole year 1917, since the plight of the French army was grave, and recovery proved slow. Sir Douglas Haig was left with the feeling that he had to carry the full burden of the War in the West.

At a conference held in Paris on May 4th–5th, the situation resulting from the failure of Nivelle's great attack was examined, and a continuation of the Allied offensive on the Western Front was ordered. In Mr. Lloyd George's own words, "The enemy must not be left in peace one moment." Sir Douglas Haig was more than ever resolved to fight in Flanders—and to a finish.

The Battle of Arras was therefore abandoned and the Flanders offensive substituted in its stead. The new British effort was to begin at Messines, where all preparations for it were now fully matured. This attack, however, was destined to be only the prelude to the greater offensive which later grew into the fighting known as "Passchendaele."

The Salient as a Sickle

To understand the meaning of this "first act" of the great drama, it is as well to comprehend the nature of the ground along which lay the Ypres Salient. This has aptly been likened to a great sickle, with its cutting-edge turned against the British holding the Salient. The general lie of the ground

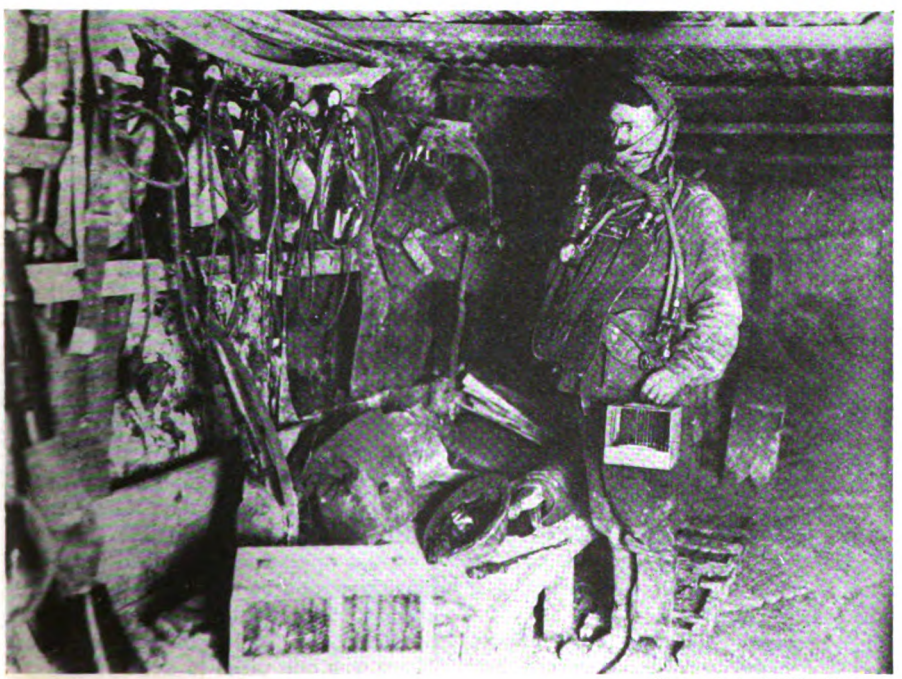

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

A RESCUE STATION UNDER THE EARTH

A mine rescue-station in the same subway-system as that illustrated above, showing a miner wearing protective apparatus, and carrying the canary or white mice used for testing subterranean air-conditions. Owing to the poisonous carbon-monoxide gas formed by the explosions, the greater part of mine-fighting had to be done by men wearing this type of apparatus.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON MESSINES RIDGE—1917

A photograph taken on June 11th, 1917, four days after the beginning of the Messines battle. Men of the 25th and 36th (Ulster) Divisions were chiefly concerned with the portion of the ridge here visible, capturing everything they encountered, including the trenches in this picture. By June 15th the enemy salient at Messines had been entirely "ironed out," our line then running from a point on the Ypres—Comines Canal above Hollebeke, due south to Armentières. The Germans were thus deprived of what one may term a dress-circle seat overlooking Ypres and the Lys valley.

was sloping down from the back of the sickle toward the town of Ypres. To the south-east there stretched the handle, and at the socket, where the blade ran into the wood, so to speak, on a ridge of higher ground, lay Messines and Wytschaete. To gain that crucial point was the first step toward loosening the German hold on the Salient—that is, the blade of the sickle had to be broken at the point where it joined the handle.

At Messines, again, the high ground formed a species of lesser salient bulging into the British front; and Sir Herbert Plumer, commanding the Second Army, now entrusted with the attack on this position, decided to "pinch it out" by making his main assaults against the haunches of the bulge. The attack on the whole position, but particularly against the centre of the bulge, was to be facilitated by the explosion of a series of great mines dug under the German lines.

Three corps were allotted to the attack:

II Anzac Corps—3rd Australian, New Zealand, 25th, and 4th Australian Divisions.

IX Corps—36th, 16th, 19th, and 11th Divisions.

X Corps—41st, 47th, 23rd, and 24th Divisions.

In reserve there was the XIV Corps—Guards, 1st, 8th, and 32nd Divisions. That is, twelve divisions in front line with four in reserve.

The artillery which was to participate on this occasion was overpowering. For once the British gunners were to enjoy many advantages over their enemy—a very different story from that of Second Ypres. To begin with, there was to be a huge superiority in the number of guns and in supply of ammunition. The batteries, too, had been well schooled, and had profited greatly from methodical training and an excellent system of command. Their ammunition, besides being abundant, was vastly better than that which they had fired on the Somme.

Guns and Air Force

A large number of guns were brought into the area from the Battle of Arras, until there were available for the Messines operation 1,500 field guns and howitzers, 200 60-pounders, 350 6-inch, and 230 8-inch and 9·2-inch howitzers, in addition to some 50 heavier pieces. There was one piece in action for every seven yards of front. Last but not least, the Army, and the artillery in particular, was assisted in its task by an air force which was able to assert its superiority over the enemy while render-

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ing invaluable service to the guns. The odds this time were on the side of the British.

These great advantages were enhanced by a long and meticulous system of training for all the troops engaged. Nothing was left undone which might facilitate the task of the infantry and reduce casualties. Away back in rear, Plumer had ordered a huge model of the German position to be constructed, on a scale which measured some 150 yards long by 50 wide. Here the commanders of all units were instructed in their coming task. The New Zealanders built another model, to the size of a tennis court, for the instruction of platoon commanders.

The work of the artillery was no less carefully planned in advance, and worked out by means of sedulous rehearsals; and it was to succeed beyond expectation. The aim of the preliminary bombardments was to cause the enemy to believe that these were but a blind; whilst it was all-important to make him disclose the position of all his own batteries, in order to prevent the recurrence of any such surprise as had occurred on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

These objects were attained by a preliminary imitation, repeated on two separate occasions, of the barrage which was to accompany the actual attack, and by carrying on continual night-firing. Five weeks' incessant shelling had already gone far toward rendering the German position more than uncomfortable. On about May 10th the real preparatory bombardment may be said to have begun. On May 17th and 24th, and again on May 30th, Messines itself was shelled with special violence. The fire grew in intensity. The enemy attempted to check it by various methods, especially by laying down smoke-screens, but all in vain.

Prudent Revelation

Even so, the full weight of the British artillery was not yet revealed. At first, only one-half of the guns available on the ground was allowed to show itself; next, only three-quarters. The full fury of the attack was reserved for the final day. In addition, six brigades of field artillery, five batteries of 6-inch howitzers, and one of 60-pounders, were at the last moment brought as far forward as was possible without their coming into view of the enemy. These were not to open fire until zero hour.

The object of the artillery was to produce a curtain of fire some 700 yards in depth, in order to prevent the German machine gunners having a chance of firing *through* that curtain. When an objective was reached, the artillery was

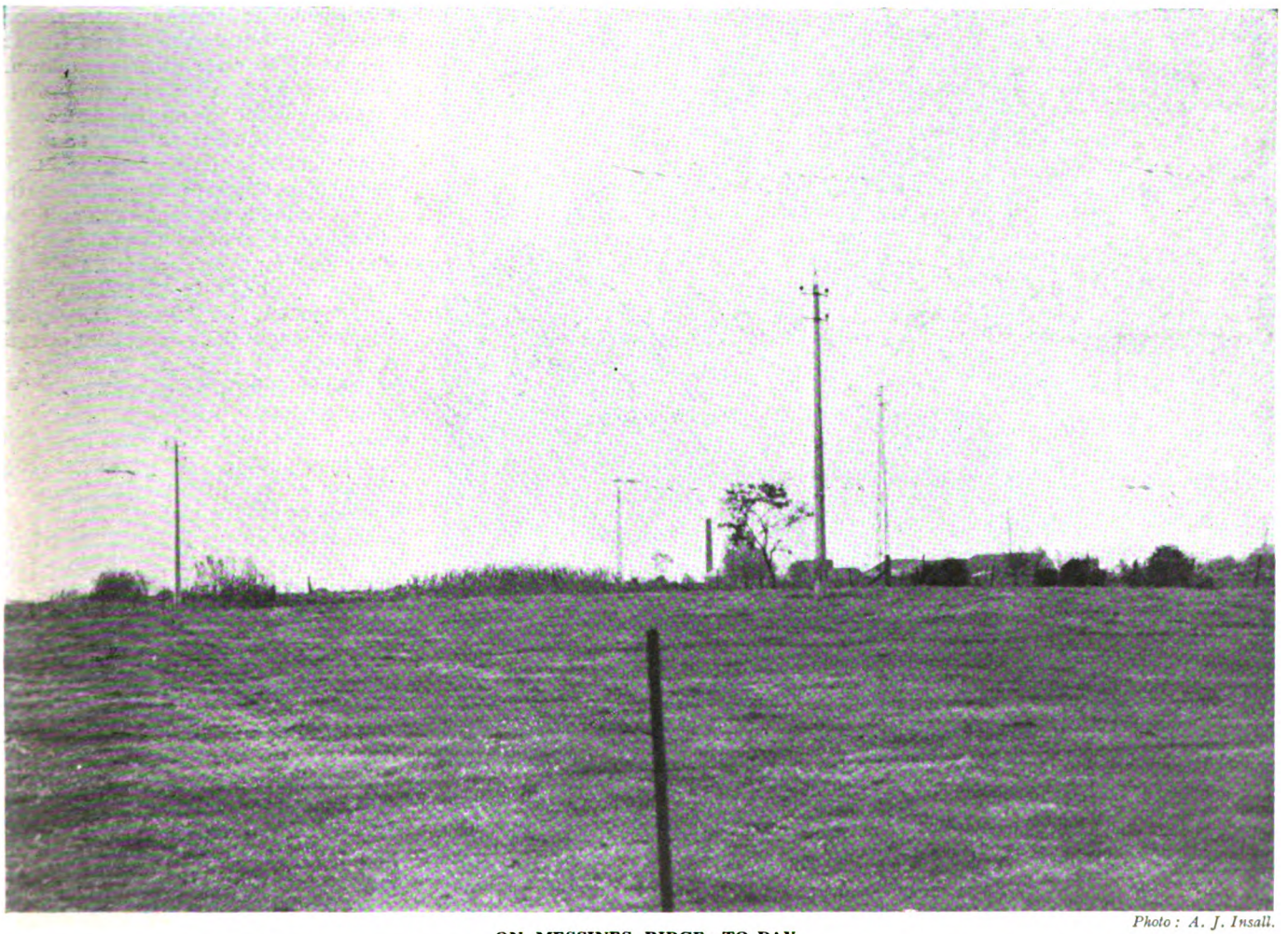

Photo: A. J. Insall.

ON MESSINES RIDGE—TO-DAY

Messines Ridge, as officially defined, ran from Messines itself *via* Swayne's Farm northward. This photograph was taken from the eastern side of the Ypres—Messines road, between the farm and Wytschaete; and in the background is the modern version of Lumm Farm. This farm, on the boundary-line between the 36th and 25th Divisions, had been made the site of a blockhouse (still standing, by the way), where during the attack of June 7th, 1917, a vigorous resistance was made against the 15th Royal Irish Rifles. In April, 1918, the farm was once more the scene of severe fighting, and, after being lost to the enemy, was retaken by the 2nd South African Regiment.

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to search the ground for 1,000 yards in front of the captured area to prevent the enemy from assembling for a counter-attack.

By such methods the German artillery was completely disconcerted. But the enemy's gunners stuck to their work gamely, and still succeeded in making certain areas "unhealthy." Nevertheless, the British counter-battery work enjoyed such advantages that very many German guns were destroyed, while the hostile system of artillery command became disorganised. The wire-cutting also proved admirable, which rendered the task of the attacking infantry not only simpler, but also far less costly.

In many respects the work of the engineers was to be yet more remarkable. It is no exaggeration to say that the mining which preceded the battle of Messines was on a scale hitherto unprecedented in war. The quantity of high explosive employed on June 7th exceeded by far anything that had formerly been imagined practicable.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE MESSINES BATTLEFIELD IN MINIATURE

Men of the 13th Brigade studying a large relief-map of the area about to be attacked between Petit Pont and Nieppe, June 6th, 1917. These maps, which might more correctly be called scale models, were several in number, and helped greatly to furnish the troops with a clear understanding of their forthcoming objectives—an understanding which in turn constituted an appreciable factor in the successes of June 7th and after. Petit Pont and Nieppe lie south of Messines, north of Armentières, and west of Ploegsteert.

Praise for Tunnellers

And apart from the scale of these mines, the work of the tunnelling units employed on their construction was equally noteworthy, for these troops were continually exposed to risks which had no counterpart in mining as practised in civil life. They were generally exposed to the annihilating effects of the enemy's counter-mining, whilst they were frequently burrowing into treacherous, wet earth. The work performed underground by the British tunnelling companies was as remarkable and heroic as anything achieved by combatant troops on the surface. Small wonder that no tunnelling unit could stand the strain for more than a few months at a time.

Although a deep mine had actually been begun against Hill 60 in 1915, it was not until 1916 that systematic mining was put in hand on the Messines front. Then for a whole year a species of underground warfare was in progress. The British galleries at Messines were driven at a depth and on a scale hitherto unknown. There were no data then known to civil practice by which the probable effects of such huge explosions as were contemplated could be accurately forecast. This referred in particular to the possible earth tremors set up by the explosions and the consequent effect of such terrific shocks on the existing trench systems.

Mines, it should be explained, are either "shallow" or "deep," the degree of depth being entirely dependent on the effect which it is desired to produce. To combat such underground work an enemy commonly resorts to "counter-mining," this being a process whereby a shaft or gallery is driven in the direction of the hostile underground workings in such a manner, at such a depth, and to such a distance, that the explosion of a charge placed in the correct spot wrecks the opponents' workings. It is a most skilful and highly technical side of military engineering, and during the War gave rise to a most remarkable series of underground struggles.

Germans in the Dark

At Messines the enormous charges which it was proposed to use allowed the British mines to be sunk to a considerably greater depth than usual, and this fact seems to have misled the enemy altogether. Consequently, although the Germans clearly suspected that some such work was in progress, they never really discovered either the depth, scale, or number of mines being driven against them. They sank a few shafts, seemingly at random, wherever

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they imagined work to be going on, and drove galleries at various depths.

All the time, however, they were busily engaged on other more shallow workings. And such shallow galleries could be dangerous. In June, 1916, a German mine fired just above the deep British gallery near Hill 60 destroyed the British working to a length of 250 feet, entombing 12 men. The greatest difficulty was experienced in rescuing these men. The task took no less than ten days, and the rescue party could eventually find only eleven men—dead from suffocation. Soon afterwards the twelfth man—a miner by trade—who had been working at a slightly higher level in the gallery, and was still alive owing to the greater purity of the air round him, crawled out on hearing the rescuers. He had kept himself on half a pint of water in his bottle; with this he periodically rinsed his mouth, and returned it into the bottle. He had some biscuits, but had refrained from eating them owing to his fear of producing an intolerable thirst.

Again, in September, 1916, the enemy was suddenly heard working so close that his conversation became audible. All activity on our part was temporarily suspended. Then some remarkable counter-mining was begun, and the enemy's workings were successfully destroyed. On another occasion our listening apparatus revealed an enemy gallery being driven toward a British mine. It was calculated that the German gallery would pass above the British, which it did; and the British mine was proceeded with when the danger of discovery was past.

Enemy Mine Explosions

During February, March, April, and May, 1917, the enemy blew some heavy mines against the British works. But only twice did he achieve any result, the depth of the British mines saving them. On February 10th a heavy German charge was fired in the centre of the Messines Salient. The earth tremor was considerable, and much damage resulted; but it was all remedied in a few weeks.

More serious was the explosion of a large German mine near Spanbroekmolen, where the greatest of the British mines was situated. Here the main gallery was completely wrecked, and the charges, already in position, were lost. Three months' desperate effort was required to make good the damage and to recover the explosive, which was found intact. But this was done only on June 3rd, four days before the battle.

Drawn by F. Matania.

"GOOD-BYE, OLD MAN!"

This famous sketch of a gunner taking leave of an equine pal stirred many hearts when it made its appearance in the *Sphere*. One need not, indeed, be prone to sentimentality to perceive something strikingly pathetic in the dumb agony of creatures maimed and mangled in the performance of a service even less optional than that imposed upon the human conscript. Nor was the horse a less faithful servitor than the man.

In addition to enemy action, water was a frequent source of trouble, and sometimes of failure. The great "Berlin Tunnel," which gave access to the important mines situated under Hill 60 and "The Caterpillar," became completely flooded in September, 1916. No amount of pumping could keep the water under; so a new shaft was sunk, nearer the enemy, and the charges were recovered—dry.

The Germans habitually resorted to concrete to line their shafts; but even so, the risk of water was considerable, and pumping usually remained necessary. The deep British shafts were consequently sunk right through the spongy, water-logged earth, and then through the layer of water-tight clay beneath it, so that the galleries were dug in fairly dry soil. This rendered the work easier, although the danger of flooding was never absent,

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN AN OLD FLEMISH FARMSTEAD

Two Tommies in a rustic setting near Messines, June 10th, 1917. Martens Farm lies just east of the Wytschaete—St. Eloi road, about half-way between those two villages; and on June 7th, 1917, it was opposite the 19th Divisional front. This division, which attacked on the left of the 16th (Irish) Division, had by 7.50 a.m. reached the road named, the 9th Cheshires capturing Onraete Farm and Wood a little way south-east of Martens Farm, and the 7th South Lancs. simultaneously storming a pill-box (Dome House) just north of it. This pill-box, it is of interest to note, is still standing.

while the risk of striking soft and wet ground remained, although it was always far greater in "shallow" mining. Thus in March, 1917, a gallery 194 feet long had to be abandoned when it ran into a quicksand.

A Story of Ingenuity

The whole story of the mining at Messines is one of ingenuity and resource on the part of the miners which is hard to equal. The Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Tunnelling Companies also played an outstanding part in this magnificent work. On the whole, there is little doubt that the work of the British miners was in every respect superior to that of the enemy.

The proof is that the Germans, on April 9th, 1917, carried out a heavy raid by 600 infantry, strongly supported by artillery fire, in an attempt to find and wreck the entrance of one of our mine systems of whose existence they were vaguely aware. The raid failed utterly in its purpose, as indeed such attempts must nearly always do, since mine workings are almost impossible to find if there has been time to conceal them. The Germans on this occasion went so far as to carry off samples of excavated earth from which to estimate the depth at which the British mines were being driven. All in vain; the whole of the spoil extracted from our workings had been conveyed away by hand, in sacks, so as to leave no trace visible either to raiding infantry or even to the aerial photographer.

By June 7th the British had driven 24 galleries under the German trench system. Nineteen mines, charged with a total of no less than 1,000,000 pounds of high explosive, were actually fired—all with entire success.

Nearly half this amount was placed under the 4,500 yards of front situated in the centre of the Messines salient. The resulting craters were gigantic, varying from 250 to 300 feet in diameter, and going down to a depth of 50, 60, or even 70 feet.

In addition, each crater was left surrounded by a ring of earth 60 to 90 feet wide at its base, and anything up to 30 feet in height. The radius of total destruction of the German trenches might measure from 100 to 150 yards, but the radius of shock and concussion sufficient to kill or incapacitate the German garrisons extended far beyond that.

When the Mines Went Up

The scene at the moment of the explosions was impressive beyond words.

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"At 3.10 a.m.—on June 7th—hell itself burst forth along the whole of the Second Army Front," as one spectator put it. The Inspector of Mines, watching from his observatory, described it thus in his diary: "A violent earth tremor, then a gorgeous sheet of flame from Spanbroekmolen, and at the same moment every gun opened fire. At short intervals of seconds the mines continued to explode; periods which elapsed between first and last mine, about 30 seconds. I found it difficult to concentrate on looking for the mines, there was so much going on; and the scene, which baffles description, developed so quickly that my attention was distracted. The majority of the mines showed up well with a fine flame. Others merely showed a red glow; this may have been due to their being blotted out by the smoke of the bombardment. The earth shake was remarkable, and was felt as far as Cassel."

An extract from Ludendorff's memoirs may give an idea of the enemy's feelings. "We should have succeeded in retaining the position but for the exceptionally powerful mines used by the British. . . . The result of these successful mining operations was that the enemy broke through on June 7th. . . . All had been quiet, and no sound of underground work on the part of the enemy could be heard at our listening-posts. The mines must, therefore, have been in position long before. The moral effect of the explosions was simply staggering; at several points our troops fell back before the onslaught of the enemy infantry." Naturally enough, the Germans would try to ascribe their defeat to the effect of the mines alone. But had these not been accompanied by admirable management of the attack, as well as by artillery fire, they would never have proved so successful.

How the Infantry Took It

It is now time once more to consider the work of the attacking infantry at daybreak on June 7th. "Even the British troops in the front line, awaiting the explosion as the signal for advance, were shaken and momentarily disorganised by the stupendous shock. It was as though a volcanic eruption had suddenly taken place before them. This is how one battalion (7th Leinster Regiment of the 16th Division) described its experience:

"Deep silence reigned everywhere. Dawn was just breaking. The nightingales in Rossignol Wood were still finishing their night's song, when suddenly hell was let loose, and the greatest

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TROPHIES OF MESSINES

A jovial party of men of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, on the parapet of a German trench captured by them in the Battle of Messines. The haul of souvenirs includes German caps, a helmet, a rifle, two bayonets, and one or two minor items. This photograph was taken on June 11th, 1917, a day which saw our troops advance on the south wing of the new British front east of the Messines—Wytschaete ridge, and also witnessed the capture of an extensive enemy trench system near La Poterie Farm.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON MESSINES RIDGE

Sappers engaged in digging a communication-trench toward the ridge, while shells burst in the background: this photograph was taken on June 7th, 1917. Apropos of shells, our Second Army records stated after the battle that, in the period June 1st—noon, June 10th, 2,233 guns fired no less than 2,843,163 shells, weighing 64,164 tons. If perfectly evenly distributed (which of course it was not, and could not possibly be), this bombardment would have represented 6¼ tons of ammunition to every yard of front attacked.

earthquake ever felt in Northern Europe, accompanied by the mightiest crash of sound ever heard by mortal man, broke on the still summer morn. Immediately from the whole enemy's system arose his coloured lights—the signal to his artillery that the battle had begun.

"Three of the great mines were on the immediate front of the battalion, and although all ranks knew what was to happen, the stupendous effect was almost more than human nerves could stand. Three great columns appeared out of the earth and rose slowly, majestically almost. The senses refused to believe that these were what they had been told to expect. All had lain down to receive the shock; it would have been impossible to stand or even kneel.

"Higher and higher the columns rose, and gradually the most beautiful colour-effect was observed. Orange, blue, green, and yellow flames seemed to emerge from the brown columns, and then, slowly bursting into shapelessness, the mass commenced to lurch. For minutes, literally, the falling debris, earth and stones, rained down, and it was almost impossible to move; but officers and non-commissioned officers were getting busy. . . .

"Blinded with dust and fumes, men staggered across the short space of what since 1914 had been No Man's Land. That many lost direction was natural, for communication became impossible; that units crossed and became intermingled was inevitable; that officers could keep their men in any formation was out of the question, for none could see five yards in the early dawn of mist and indescribable dust. . . .

Sickened by the Fumes

"The worst effect of the explosion fumes was to give a large number of the attackers a violent sickness. . . . The barrage which broke out at Zero and covered the advance of the troops was unexampled in its intensity. . . . Every machine gun on the front was pouring its hail of lead over the heads of the attackers, and the frightful rattle of these was perhaps the most deafening of all the inferno of sound. . . . Gradually some order came out of chaos . . . slowly the fog lifted and the troops could see their objectives and obtain some idea of direction."[1]

Such was the story in the centre of the attack. On the extreme right it was the same: "Soon after 3.5 a.m., a flare burst into two green stars. A machine gun broke out; then another. A second green flare followed. A rifle flashed. It seemed certain that the New Zealanders . . . had been detected. But the two machine guns, after chattering for

[1] Whitton, *The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment*, ii, p. 416.

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Photo: Keystone.

THE RIDGE IN PEACE-TIME

The modern aspect of Messines Ridge is much like that of any other stretch of pasture-land. Young trees are rapidly growing up, and the lush grass has healed most of the scars of war. The German troops engaged in the Battle of Messines formed part of the *IV Corps* (General Sixt von Armin's *Fourth Army*), and the enemy had 300 aeroplanes to devote to the area between Messines and the sea. We, on the other hand, had 300 machines in the battle-area alone.

three minutes, fell silent. At 3.9 there was unbroken silence. At 3.10 a number of big guns began to fire, and then the trench walls rocked; to the left, near Wytschaete, a huge bubble was swelling, mushroom-shaped, from the earth, and then burst, to cast a molten, rosy glow on the under surface of some dense cloud low above it.

"As its brilliance faded, two more bubbles burst beside it. During twenty seconds the same thing happened again and again, from the right to the far left. The nineteen great mines had been exploded. With a roar the machine-gun barrage broke out. The massed artillery was already firing. The ridge faded from view, and for two hours nothing could be seen of it . . . through a fog of smoke and dust. . . . The local German garrison, already overstrained by the week's bombardment, was entirely unstrung."[1] Even some of the Australians closest to the mines suffered a momentary scare.[2]

A Bloodless Nightmare

If indeed this first infantry assault was easy and almost bloodless, it proved, in fact, a perfect nightmare. One division reported that the advance across the mile-long front allotted to it was difficult. "Huge resultant ant-heaps and saucers" split up the advance. The dust and haze, the mist and fumes, all rising from ground churned up by the terrific barrage, increased the difficulties of keeping direction and organisation.

In some sectors "successive waves and lines became amalgamated as one dense wave."[1] So much was this felt that some commanding officers afterwards said that the advantages of the mines were counterbalanced by the difficulties which were experienced later. Nevertheless, the moral effect on the enemy was terrific. When the British advanced, the German artillery at first remained dumb. One battery fired on the wood known as Bois Carré; a few heavy shells fell along the British reserve lines; otherwise the enemy seemed momentarily paralysed.

As Hindenburg himself wrote afterwards: "The ground rose from beneath the feet of the defenders, their most vital points collapsed, and through the smoke and falling debris of the mines the English storm-troops passed forward."[2]

[1] The 204*th Division* (opposite the left of the attack) had 10 officers and 677 men killed by the explosions.
[2] *Australian Official History*, iv, p. 593.

[1] *Ibid.*, iv, p. 594.
[2] Hindenburg, *Out of my Life*.

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Crouched behind the last remnants of their broken defences, stumbling over the lacerated ground and in and out of wrecks of trenches, here and there the German survivors were found, mostly huddled in concrete shelters which had been half overturned or shattered.

A few were found in shell-holes, totally incapable of action. Many had bolted for life, leaving arms, ammunition, clothing, even cigars and food where their line had once stood. Others, cowed and shaken, surrendered as soon as the British appeared. Every shelter was bombed by the attackers; and out of some the occupants came cringing like beaten animals. "They made many attempts to embrace us; I have never seen men so demoralised." So wrote a Tasmanian officer.[1]

A Ghastly Sight

The Chief of the General Staff of the Second Army, after visiting the captured ground, wrote: "I shall never forget the sight. I remember so well going into a concrete dug-out near Spanbroekmolen—our biggest crater—and finding four German officers sitting round a table—all dead—killed by shock. They might have been playing bridge. It was an uncanny sight—not a mark on any of them. I can see their ghastly white faces as I write. In the wallet of one of them was found a copy of a message sent at 2.40 a.m.—30 minutes before zero—saying: 'Situation comparatively quiet.'"[1]

[1] Lieut. W. L. Garrard, 40th Australian Inf.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WATER-CARRIERS

A water-carrying party going up to the line near Messines, wearing Yukon packs. As the Battle of Messines was to take place in the summer, elaborate preparations had to be made beforehand to ensure an adequate supply of drinking-water. Lakes were tapped, pits to catch rain-water were dug on the Mont-des-Cats heights round Kemmel, and the water of the Lys was pumped into barges and then sterilised. From all these sources pipe-lines were taken forward, and ample provision was made for a rapid extension in the event of victory. The achievements of the R.E. may be judged from the fact that by June 15th, 1917, from 450,000 to 600,000 gallons of water were being supplied daily to our troops: a remarkable piece of organisation.

The fact is that the enemy for once had been surprised. It is curious that this should have been the case, since he had obtained conclusive evidence that he would be attacked, probably on June 7th. But the exact hour was not revealed to him; the overwhelming superiority of the guns had not been foreseen; whilst the nature and magnitude of the British mining preparations had not been realised. The result was a surprise of an overwhelming nature.

Everywhere along the front reports of a like nature were coming in to headquarters. Australians on the right, Ulstermen in the centre, 23rd Division on the left—all found little resistance as the attack, preceded by a barrage of unprecedented severity, swept on. Only on the extreme flanks did the enemy appear capable of any solid resistance.

Here and there, it is true, German machine gunners lived up to their reputation, and a number of tough little fights took place round the enemy's machine-gun nests. Nevertheless, the British line moved steadily forward, being retarded more by the fearful upheaval of the ground caused by the explosions and the bombardment than by the enemy's resistance. The battle was not only going "according to plan"—it was going even better than had been planned. Had the artillery barrage been timed to lift at a quicker rate, the infantry could have followed and made yet more rapid progress.

The "Coloured" Objectives

The plan, which had been worked out with scrupulous precision, had in fact allowed for three distinct forward movements. Firstly, from the front British line a bound was to be made to the crest of the ridge well beyond the village of Messines—in order to reduce the salient. This attack would come to a halt on the so-called "Black Line."

Next, as soon as the "Black Line" was securely held, there was to follow a secondary move to the "Dotted Black Line,"[2] this being a short advance, in the centre only, so as to make good some important ground stretching away to the north of Messines.

Lastly, in the afternoon, was to come the final advance to the "Green Line," better known as the "Oosttaverne Line." This last named was the final objective, and its attainment would give the British the whole of the Messines ridge and flatten out the front

[1] Harington, *Plumer of Messines*, p. 104.
[2] Also known as the "Mauve Line."

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of the German bulge. It would thus leave the British line along the edge of the low-lying, wet ground at the foot of the slope.

Soon after 5 a.m.—that is, in little more than two hours—the "Black Line" had been reached virtually all along its length. The New Zealanders were streaming past Messines village. On the right, it is true, the 47th Division, attacking "Spoil Bank" near the Ypres-Comines Canal, had been slower in getting forward, for the resistance had been stiffer. Still, progress was made; and consequently, during the early morning, all along the ridge the advancing troops, now supported by their reserves, displayed a feverish activity to consolidate their gains and to make ready to meet the German counter-attack, which was regarded as inevitable.

The inaction of the German heavy artillery, well in rear of the scene of the mine explosions, seemed inexplicable, and could be ascribed only to the blindness of the German gunners due to the failure of their aircraft. But shortly after 7 a.m. a German aeroplane succeeded in coming over the new front, and soon the enemy's guns began to show some activity, although not enough to prevent the "Black Dotted Line" from also falling into British hands.

The German Counter

Nevertheless, as the morning wore on, the slow progress made in bringing forward the British reserve divisions and the artillery led to delay, and in the end it was decided to postpone the afternoon advance to the Oosttaverne Line by two hours. Moreover, at this juncture the bombardment of the afternoon objectives had to be suspended owing to the obvious preparations being made by the enemy for a counter-attack.

At long last it seemed that the customary reaction was about to take place. By 1 p.m. the Germans were massing in the Oosttaverne Line, where, as it was subsequently ascertained, three divisions had assembled. These were sent forward to attack the British in their newly-won positions, and the centre of the attempt was directed against the 25th and New Zealand Divisions.

But the German advance made no real headway. The British artillery and machine guns were ready, and such a devastating fire was opened on the attackers that the movement speedily collapsed. By 2.30 p.m. the threat of any serious counter-attack had passed; nowhere had the enemy come up even to the "Black Dotted Line."

Our artillery was now free to prepare the way for the movement against the "Green Line." This latter had obviously been reinforced by now, and, even if the enemy's midday effort had failed, it was clear that some stiffer fighting was in prospect. Nevertheless, it was no bad thing that Plumer should have delayed this afternoon attack for two hours, since, although the delay gave the Germans some respite, the British troops in the centre had much farther to advance than those on the flanks.

The ground was villainous, and the

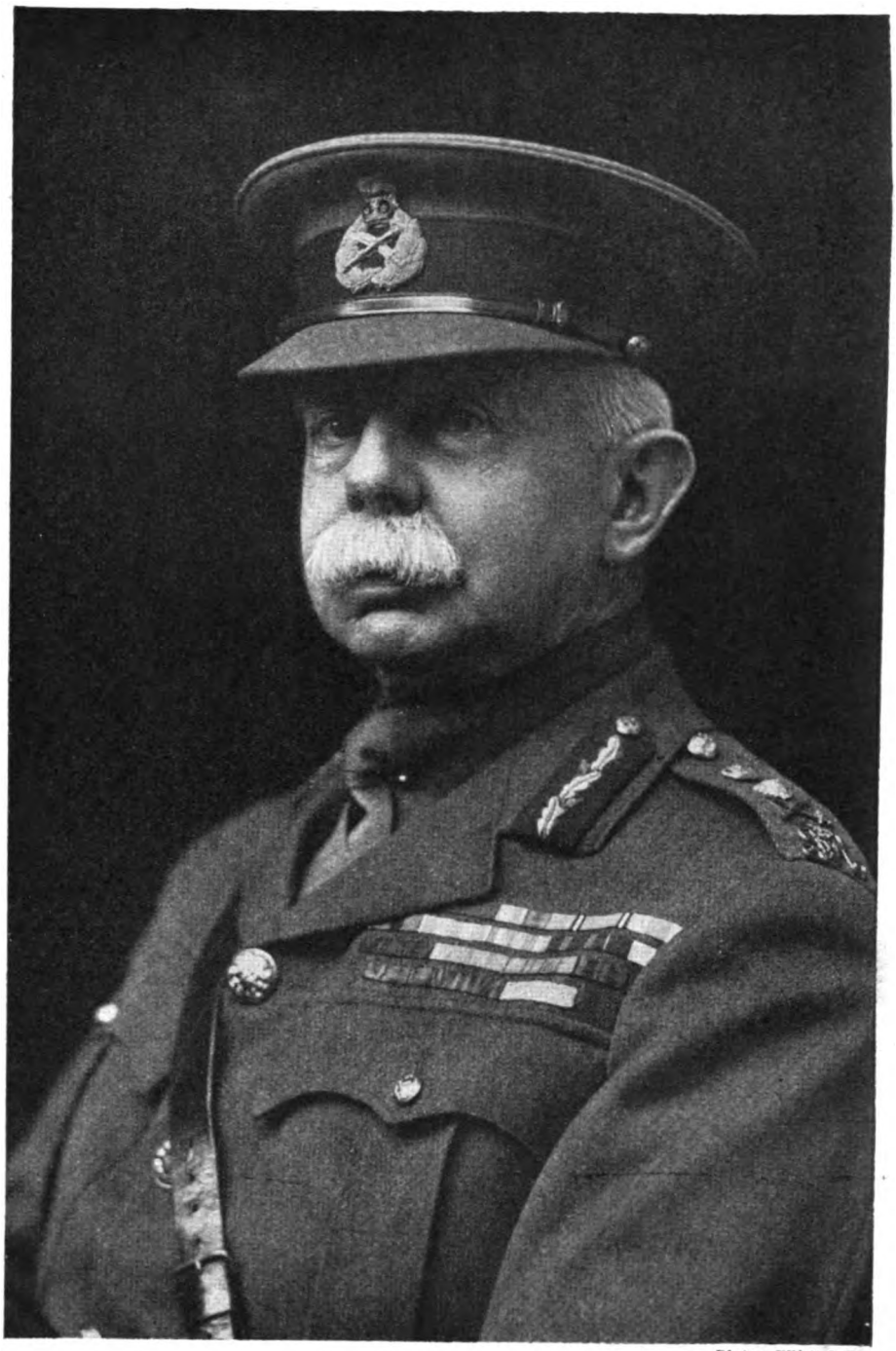

Photo: Elliott & Fry.

LORD PLUMER OF MESSINES

General Plumer began his military career as a lieutenant in the York and Lancaster Regiment in 1876. After distinguishing himself in various African campaigns, he became G.O.C. Northern Command in 1911. In January, 1915, he took command of the V Army Corps, and in May was appointed to the Second Army. His successful share in the Battle of Messines first brought him into public notice, and from November, 1917, to March, 1918, he was in charge of the British Force in Italy. On his return he again assumed command of the Second Army, and it is from that time—notwithstanding Messines—that his best achievements must be dated. He died in 1932.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

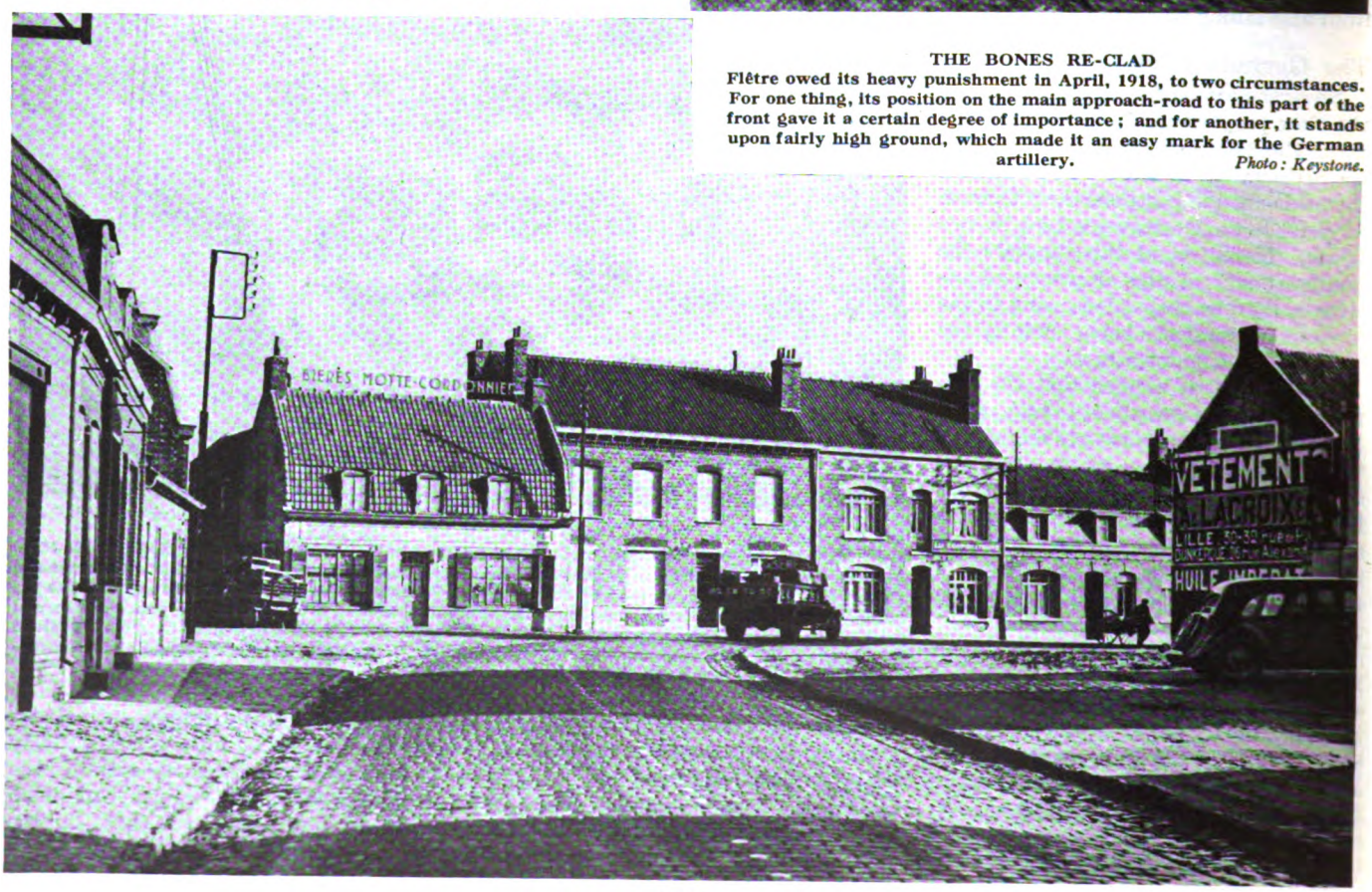
THE SKELETON OF FLÊTRE

Readers will recollect that this village, of which two modern photographs appeared on page 914, is situated a short distance east of Caestre, on the road from Bailleul to Cassel. The firing-line came nearest to it on April 30th, 1918, during which month most of the damage here seen was done. (This photograph was taken on May 14th.)

THE BONES RE-CLAD

Flêtre owed its heavy punishment in April, 1918, to two circumstances. For one thing, its position on the main approach-road to this part of the front gave it a certain degree of importance; and for another, it stands upon fairly high ground, which made it an easy mark for the German artillery.

Photo: Keystone.



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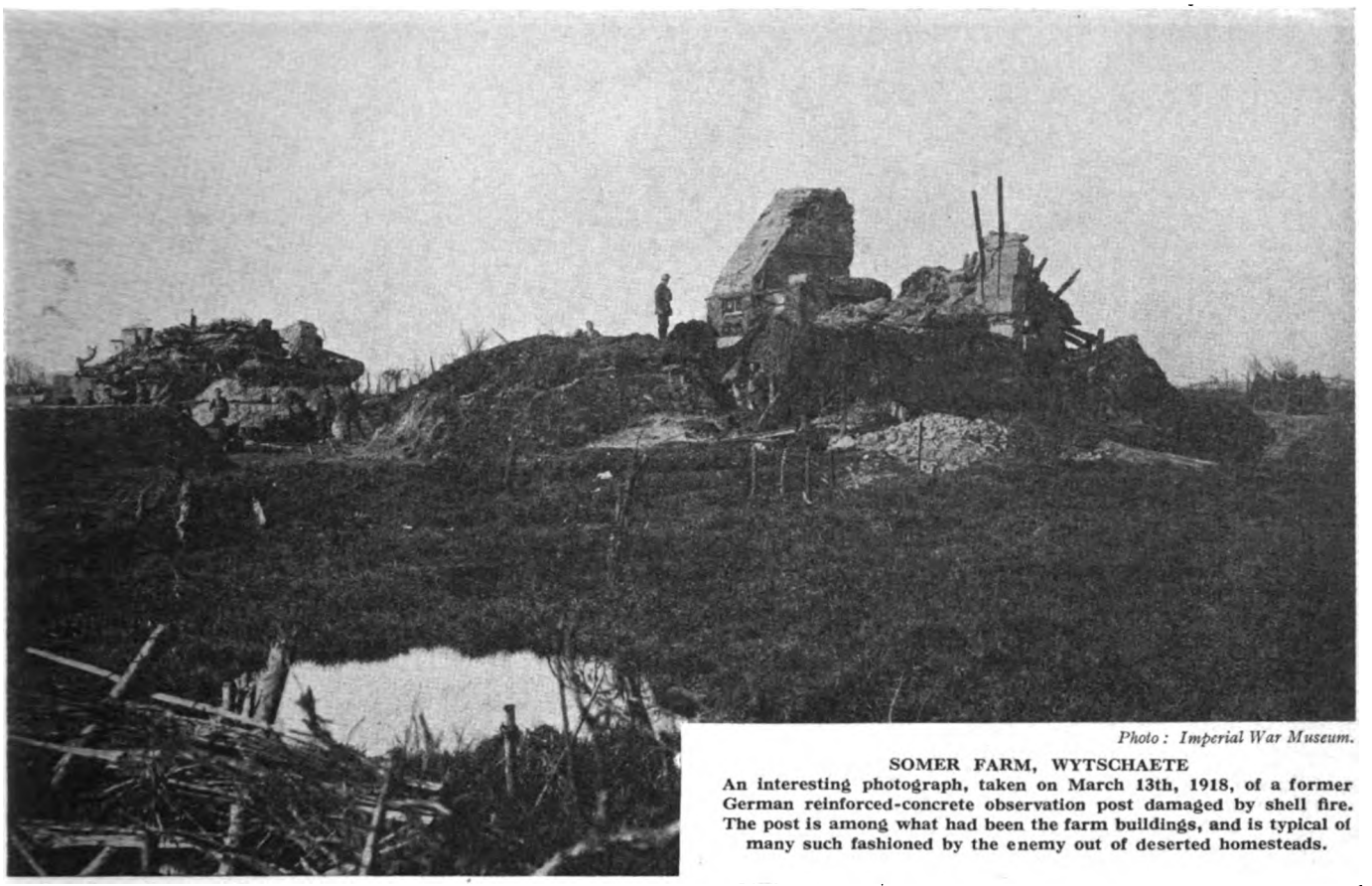

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

SOMER FARM, WYTSCHAETE

An interesting photograph, taken on March 13th, 1918, of a former German reinforced-concrete observation post damaged by shell fire. The post is among what had been the farm buildings, and is typical of many such fashioned by the enemy out of deserted homesteads.

FLOURISHING AGAIN

Somer Farm in its modern guise is also an estaminet, named "Au Rossignol," or "At the Sign of the Nightingale." These birds, it may be mentioned, are very common in the region of Wytschaete. An estaminet also occupied part of this site before the destruction of the old buildings.

Photo : Keystone.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MESSINES FROM THE AIR

A war-time view of the village taken from an aeroplane flying on the south-western side. Trenches are seen in the foreground, and the general layout of the southern end of the famous ridge is clearly shown. Running through the left-hand side of the village, and disappearing at the bottom edge of the picture, is the road to Wulverghem. Branching off this a little way above the sharp bend, and running off to the left-hand margin, may be traced the minor road to Spanbroekmolen, where our largest mine was blown. Wytschaete and Oosttaverne are out of sight to the left of this photograph. The road running from the left-hand edge of Messines toward the picture's right, and then making a right-angle to the left, is the route to Gapaard and Wambeke. Just beyond the right-hand margin, near the top, lies Warneton.

weather warm. The men had been fighting and entrenching for many hours, and now there came a natural reaction which even the discovery in many dug-outs of large stores of German army cigars failed to counteract. In spite of considerable fatigue, however, the attack was pushed forward; but the battle was becoming less one-sided, for the Germans had largely recovered themselves, and fresh troops had been brought up.

Few Hitches, Low Casualties

On the British side, too, there occurred the mishaps and lack of precision which always attended any advance of this type after the first successful rush. At Messines, however, the movement proceeded with fewer hitches than in any previous engagement of the same magnitude, and the casualties remained agreeably low.

Consequently the greater part of the Oosttaverne line had been taken before the close of the afternoon, even though there was found to be a nasty gap in its right centre at the Blauwepoortbeek stream. An unfortunate series of misunderstandings, largely on the part of the artillery, thus marred what was otherwise a remarkable success.

Another feature, particularly noticeable on either flank of the attack, has caused the Battle of Messines to become memorable in the annals of the Great War. It was the first occasion on which the British Army made the acquaintance of the German armoured-concrete blockhouse, otherwise known as the "pill-box," which became so prominent a feature of the subsequent Third Battle of Ypres.

Finding that digging was impossible in the wet ground of Flanders, the Germans had begun to replace sandbag redoubts by structures of steel and concrete, which were specially adapted for use by machine gunners. These blockhouses could be used as shelters, from which machine guns could be brought out into the open when opportunity served, but more generally they served as permanent machine-gun posts.

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Being constructed to resist all types of lighter artillery, the thickness of their walls was such as to render the slits left open for fire somewhat cramped. Consequently it was soon found that the easiest way of attacking these pill-boxes was to mask them by smoke or by bombs, and then to approach their "blind spots" until more bombs could be thrown into them through the slits, or until they could be attacked from the rear.

No Rules of "Civilised" War

A complete technique was evolved for the attack of these little redoubts, which were rarely yielded without a murderous struggle. In fact, pill-box warfare soon imparted a particularly ferocious character to the fighting during the summer and autumn of 1917. The deadly fire usually directed from a blockhouse was often followed by the annihilation or surrender of its garrison. Such fighting, as may be imagined, brought men's feelings to a pitch of tension where no rules of "civilised" warfare availed.

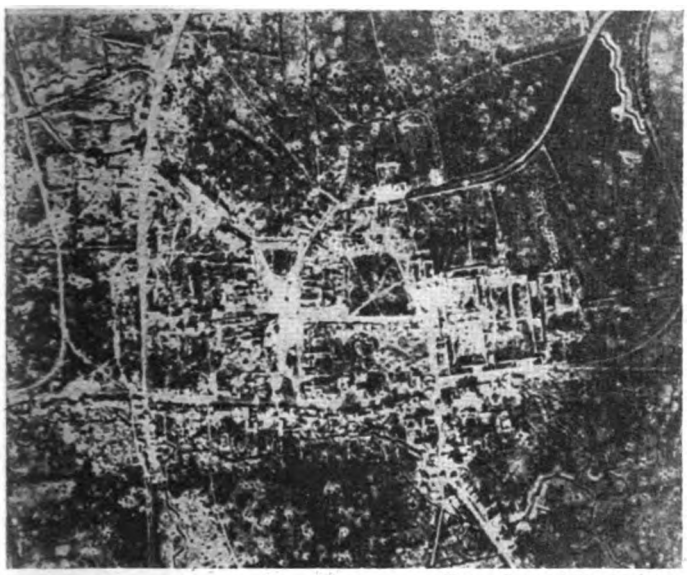

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MESSINES—MAY, 1917

A view taken from, so to speak, the same point in the air as its predecessor, on May 19th, 1917. The effects of our bombardment are marked: no longer can individual buildings be traced, and shell-holes are numerous.

"With death singing about their ears, they will kill until they grow tired of killing." [1]

It was the Australians who first encountered the pill-boxes, at the southern shoulder of the Messines salient. The first blockhouse to be tackled was captured by the Queenslanders, who succeeded in getting to the rear of it, whence they poured Lewis-gun fire into "the garrison huddled inside, so that the shrieking men melted into a groaning heap, which gradually fell silent." [2] But the ruthlessness of this class of fighting was partially redeemed by the desperate bravery shown.

What the Australians did on this evening of the battle was repeated by the 23rd Division on the left, near Hill 60. The struggle for Battle Wood on this flank was, indeed, a worthy parallel to what was taking place on the extreme right at Oosttaverne village and "Hun's Walk," where the Australians were engaged.

[1] *Australian Official History*, iv, p. 624.
[2] *Ibid.*, p 625.

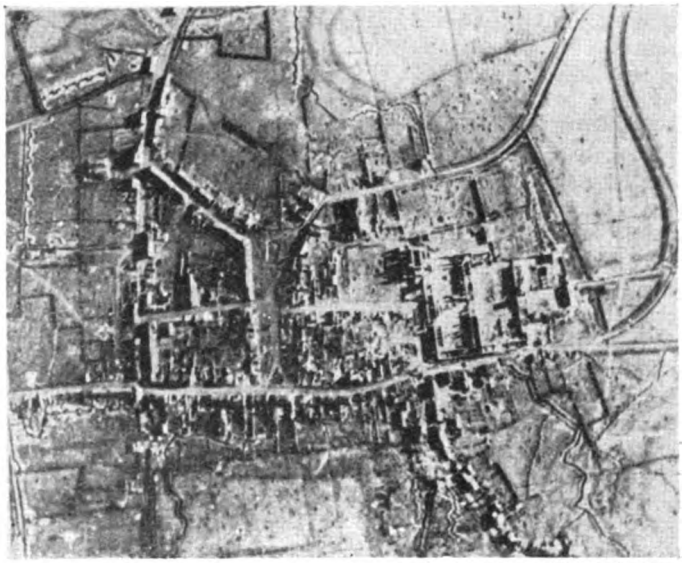

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MESSINES—FEBRUARY, 1916

Another aerial view of the village—this time taken from immediately overhead—showing it as it appeared to a British pilot on February 29th, 1916. At this time, of course, Messines and its ridge were in German hands.

Although the Oosttaverne line was now all but held, there was still to be some bitter fighting of a minor character. The night of the 7th/8th was marked by a German counter-attack, which came to nothing. On the 8th various efforts were made by the British to improve the line. The next day too, the 9th, was spent in similar tasks, with a more serious attempt to close the gap at Blauwepoortbeek; and further fighting again took place at minor points on June 10th. But although their artillery now began to intervene in a far more decided manner, the Germans never really recovered from their initial defeat. By June 12th they had everywhere been ousted from the Oosttaverne Line, and on that night they withdrew into their new Warneton

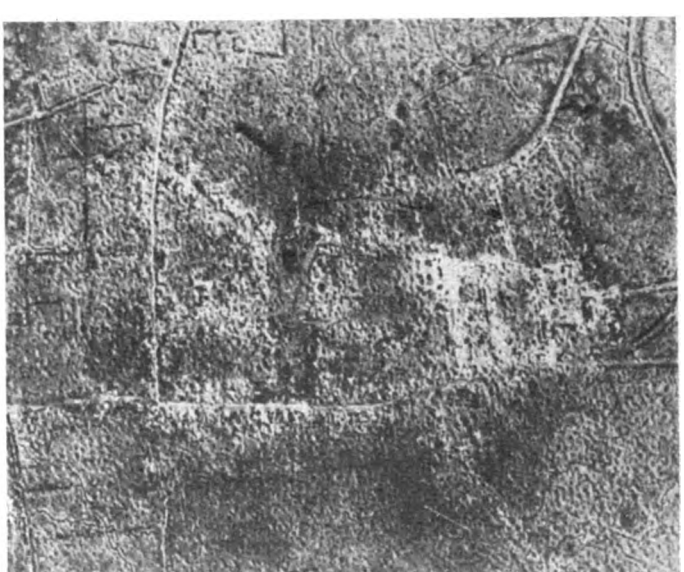

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MESSINES—JUNE, 1917

Showing the prize after it had passed into our hands—for the date of this view is June 18th, 1917. A certain discolouration of the pocked and pitted earth is all that now reveals to the airman where Messines once stood.

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Line, only a few hundred yards distant from the trenches which they relinquished. So ended the Battle of Messines.

Results of the Battle

Though brief, the Battle of Messines exerted considerable influence on the course of the War. In the first place, it greatly facilitated the launching of the main Flanders offensive at the end of July. Secondly, it gave the clue to the correct procedure to be followed for subduing the enemy's field fortifications: in the absence of Tanks it was to the artillery and to the Engineers that the infantry must look for the power to demolish the German works.

It showed how it was that the attack should be conducted on the broadest possible front—in marked contrast to the later stages of the Somme, where the narrow frontage of the divisional attacks simply led to a heavy concentration of hostile gunfire against the small attacking force. Lastly, it demonstrated the great advantage to be derived by the artillery from standing on the outer edge of a salient.

It was the misunderstanding of these lessons that led, as much as anything else, to the sacrifices which were about to be offered at "Third Ypres"; it was the correct application of these principles that saved "Third Ypres" from degenerating into a long period of unnecessary slaughter.

At Messines, moreover, the Germans unquestionably suffered very heavily—probably incurring, from first to last, some 30,000 casualties. The British losses were: II Anzac Corps (including British 25th Division), 13,000; IX Corps, 4,000; X Corps, about 8,000. A large part of these casualties were incurred during the stubborn fighting on the southern flank, where little result was achieved.

The German official view came to regard this battle as one of the worst experiences of the War.[1] On the British side the fact that the battle had ended in so great a success could only increase the troops' confidence in their leaders, and still more in the quality of the staff work which had contributed so largely to the outcome. Not since the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula could the British General Staff look back upon a better-planned or more conclusive achievement. The Australians, in particular, were duly impressed by the management of the entire operation.

It was not without reason that Sir Herbert Plumer after the War assumed the title of Lord Plumer "of Messines."

1 Kuhl, *Der Weltkrieg*, ii, p. 114.

OOSTTAVERNE WOOD CEMETERY

Photo: Imperial War Graves Commission.

This cemetery stands at the north-east corner of the wood, slightly less than 2 km. north-east of the village: its exact position being just west of the Voormezeele—Warneton road. In the attack of June 7th, 1917, Oosttaverne Wood fell to the 57th Brigade—consisting of the 8th North Staffs., 10th Royal Warwicks, 8th Gloucesters, and 10th Worcesters—which broke down all resistance at this point. In the cemetery lie buried 923 United Kingdom, 133 Canadian, 43 Australian, 19 New Zealand, and a number of German dead.

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CHAPTER LVIII

1917 IN SALONICA

The year 1917 saw the campaign in Salonica still active. For the men serving in that theatre, there was little glory and a good deal of fighting and disease. Nevertheless, this long-drawn-out and seemingly unproductive campaign was serving its purpose. A "side-show," perhaps, Salonica may have been, but the men serving there played their part in the steady undermining of their enemy's morale.

BRITISH troops in Macedonia had their fill of Balkan winter in the early months of 1917. Those of the XVI Corps, in the flooded, wind-swept, snow-bogged Struma Valley, who "lived and moved and had their being" in water, evacuated 4,000 sick during January and February. In all kinds of weather patrolling had to be maintained; at intervals there were raids by both sides. The anthem of exiled Tommies shivering even in goat-skins or leather jerkins was: "Oh, oh, oh, it's a lovely war!"

Lightning Turkish Swoops

The New Year was but ten days old when Turkish troops swooped on Kalendra and spent ten minutes capturing a Lewis gun and 8 of the 30 Royal Munster Fusiliers who held this post. In the following week Turkish patrols tried the same trick on posts of the 82nd Brigade at Kakaraska. In this 27th Division area there were constant minor brushes with the enemy. Yeomanry lay in wait for enemy parties slinking out to cut maize, and killed a number.

On the 28th Division front, troops of the 1st Suffolk, Derbyshire Yeomanry, and 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers celebrated the New Year by raiding Kyupri on the 3rd, bottling up the garrison, and stealing 30 of them. On the night of the 5th, troops of the 65th Brigade surrounded Akinjali, east of Doiran Lake, with like intent; but here the garrison slipped through the net, leaving only four men as consolation prize.

On the 30th an officer and 22 men of the 181st Brigade, 60th Division, patrolled as far as Chakli village, on the Doiran—Akbusalik front, in daylight. On the way back they were ambushed by an enemy patrol thrice as strong, and had to fight their way out with the bayonet. The officer and three men were killed; three others were wounded, two missing. A week later, as revenge, the brigade sent some 2/21st and 2/24th Londonders into Brest, who stayed there all night, beat off a counter-attack, and took prisoners.

Such were the routine diversions in this hide-and-seek country of hills, marsh, ravine, orchard, and isolated copse. Mr. G. Ward Price, in *The Story of the Salonica Army*, gives the true atmosphere of patrolling in the Balkans when he says:

"It is an eerie business moving for two miles or so in single file, with all the stealth of burglars crossing a wired lawn (for the same reasons, too, since the Bulgars occasionally lay trip-wires for our men to ring a bell or detonate a bomb, so that they, lying up at close range, can get a sitting shot). Each step has to be taken as gently as if you were in a sick-room, and innumerable times you must crouch to the ground completely motionless, while the leader reconnoitres a mysterious shadow that looks as if it might be a lurking Bulgar. The meeting of hostile patrols, when it does come, is a sudden affair of bomb and bayonet, which, though it end in victory, often means a difficult journey back across rough country carrying wounded men in the dark."

A Canine Spy

He records how our patrols became interested in a dog which went loping through a certain village in No Man's Land at 9.15 every evening, returning to the Bulgar lines about a quarter of an hour later. They sleuthed it, and one night a Tommy, entering one of the derelict houses for firewood, came face to face with a Bulgar spy, who leapt into the darkness and disappeared. Evidently he was the master of the dog-courier, which smuggled information from another spy in our lines.

There was a steady trickle of deserters, especially Turks, during these early months—some lured by picture post-cards, which the French had prepared, showing Bulgar prisoners lining up for generous rations! These were signed by prisoners, and contained a word about the good treatment they were receiving. Air pilots dropped them over the enemy lines where rations were thin, with considerable effect.

A number of civilians from Seres, some of them starving, crept up to our Struma lines and begged for sanctuary. Our troops not only let the poor devils through, but shared rations with them like the good scouts they were, never grudging the day's good deed.

On the evening of February 10th there was a graver action on the Doiran front—a foretaste of the grim attack on the Bulgar stronghold which was to ring those formidable hills with smoke and flame in the spring. After two days' bombardment, the 10th Devons of the 79th Brigade attacked that foremost hill of the Bulgar fortress, Petit Couronne. Its lower slopes were steep, its upper tangled with broad belts of wire. Before they could storm it, the Devons had to cross deep, rocky Jumeaux Ravine, and Sappers had to widen the gaps in the wire by means of Bangalore torpedoes.

Names of Ill-repute

Gallantly they reached the trenches on the summit, then turned to the second objective, a concrete trench-mortar emplacement 300 yards north-west. Fighting with bomb and bayonet, one company almost reached this, but was forced back. Two further counter-attacks from a ravine on the far side of the hill were repulsed, mostly by Lewis-gun fire against Bulgars who blundered into the beams of their own searchlights.

Heavy casualties eventually compelled us to withdraw, for we had lost a quarter of the raiding force—134 officers and men. The total casualties were 158—15 killed. More British blood was later to be shed on this evil Bulgar hill, and in the ravine skirting it. "Jumeaux" and "Petit" became hated names on this Doiran front.

In the early hours of February 21st, the 67th Brigade, 22nd Division, raided Germans of the 59*th Regiment* on Machine Gun Hill, east of the Vardar, after two days' bombardment had snapped the wire at two points and Sappers had breached the remainder with torpedoes—a hazardous job, demanding courage and resource. A party, 86 strong, of the 11th Royal Welch Fusiliers met with

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSSING THE MUD

A mule-drawn sleigh carries supplies over a muddy area of the Macedonian Front during January, 1917. The early months of this year were characterised by appalling weather-conditions in the Balkans. From the flooded, snow-choked, and windswept Struma Valley 4,000 sick were evacuated during January and February alone, and the troops shivered even in goatskins.

stout resistance when it stormed the trenches, bayoneted six of the garrison, and took five prisoners, at a cost of 21 casualties—16 slightly wounded.

These Welshmen, mostly Rhondda miners, with a few from the North, were doughty fighters when their blood was up. When the writer joined them he was told how, in one raid from Smol on this front, they took axes with them to finish off the enemy wire, and in the enemy trench went on using them instead of bayonets—a reversion to the tactics of the Battle of Hastings—with fearful effect.

But they were singers as well as fighters. Often, immediately they came out of the line, they would gather under a tree and sing the hymns and lays of their native land in perfect choral harmony. The Macedonian night rang with tunes like *Dai Bach a Soldier*.

The First Serious Air Raid

The first serious German strafe from the air occurred on February 27th. A fast bombing squadron of modern machines had been established secretly at Hudova. Twenty flew down the Vardar and destroyed or damaged 12 French planes at Gorgop aerodrome, then in the afternoon raided the British 'drome at Yanesh. No. 47 Squadron, which had been warned, was mostly in the air before the first bomb fell. Little damage was done, but 28 casualties were inflicted on the personnel.

The following day the Germans flew over Summerhill Base Camp, outside Salonica, and caused nearly 300 casualties. This camp, on an exposed hillside, afforded no shelter against the merciless attack. One of the hits was on a marquee sheltering leave men. The raiders were tackled pluckily by seven machines of No. 17 Squadron, which brought down a German scout. No. 47 Squadron endeavoured to intercept the enemy on their return.

At this time we had only the two squadrons for a 90-mile front, with few fast or quick-climbing machines. Mr. Ward Price quotes a "typical morning" of an R.F.C. pilot flying a B.E. 12 in those difficult days:

"Met six hostile machines. Attacked rear one—twin tractor biplane carrying four machine-guns, three firing astern and one ahead. It dropped bombs, which missed. Its engines were both stopped. Attempt was made to place third drum on Lewis, but it was shot out of pilot's hand. Opened fire with Vickers, which jammed after fourth round. Hostile machine fell, turning on back when landing.

"Returned to repair Vickers and get more ammunition for Lewis. Left again and met five more double-engined machines. Attacked one. Petrol seen to be streaming out and observer hanging over side. Then attacked by four

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRR-R-R

This winter's scene was photographed on a road near Salonica, while a party of lorry-drivers was seeking warmth from a hot meal. Amongst other things, the year 1917 was marked by considerable success in the efforts which had been so untiringly made since the start of the campaign to overcome dysentery; and it was unfortunate that a plague of mosquitoes should have increased the casualties from malaria and Vardar fever.

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remaining machines. Having no more ammunition for Lewis, used Vickers, which jammed after second round. Returned to our lines at 2,000 feet, pursued by four enemy machines."

Hospitals Bombed

Handicaps notwithstanding, our squadrons did valuable work in bombing enemy dumps and aerodromes and in tackling raiders who greatly outnumbered them.

A tragic coincidence marked the Summerhill raid. Some of our casualties on the Tuesday were taken to a general hospital, which was bombed the following Sunday, when many were killed in their beds. On March 12th a large British hospital for the Serbs, plainly marked with red crosses, was bombed for the second time.

On the first occasion, in the previous year, German airmen had dropped a message apologising for the bombing and pleading a mistake. But two nurses, besides several others of the staff and a number of patients, were killed in the second raid. Such is the incongruous "etiquette" of war.

On April 24th opened the biggest British attack to date on the Doiran front, between the Lake and the "Pip" Ridge. This Bulgar "castle," with dominating heights up to 2,000 feet to serve as "keeps," and smaller ones like Petit Couronne as front-line bastions, has already been described.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

"SPOTTING"

Artillery observation officers with telescope and telephone in a post on the Balkan Front. The deadliness of artillery was considerably enhanced in this region by the prevalence of so much rock; for a bursting shell would spread sharp fragments far and wide, and in the precipitous gorges there was often little cover—sometimes not even the opportunity to throw oneself flat.

The "castle" analogy gives some idea of the terrific task set our troops, for it was complete even to the mediæval "moats"—steep, rocky ravines in No Man's Land which they had to cross before they could scale the enemy-held objectives. Jumeaux, the principal "moat," was 300 yards wide, 400 feet deep, and in places waist-high in water; it formed a difficult fosse in front of 2,500 yards of enemy defences of the most formidable kind.

Partial success on the right or left would mean nothing in an attack on such positions; unless the whole front was carried, the troops who did break through would come under murderous fire from three sides, rather as if they were penned in a cul-de-sac with an enemy sniping and bombing them from upper windows to left, right, and in front.

Fighting up Flights of Stairs

The configuration of the Bulgar hills was such that to break through in the centre without securing either flank would be analagous to popping one's head into a lion's mouth. All the time we had to fight up "stairs," starting from the lowest, while the Bulgar swarmed in force from above and bombarded us, so to speak, from the top landings. A heart-breaking, intimidating, nigh impossible task. . . .

The 26th Division had the 79th Brigade on the extreme right, from the Lake to Petit, and the 78th from there to a hill known as "380"; the 22nd

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TRANSPORTING WOUNDED

A quayside scene, showing sick and wounded aboard a lighter ready for transportation. Although the first three months of 1917 saw no large engagement in the Salonica campaign, there was a continual succession of short but sharp-fought minor actions, entailing a steady trickle of wounded to the base. This trickle, augmented by the much larger stream of sick, kept the medical authorities fully occupied.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE LAST DAYS OF A CHÂTEAU

The château whose battered remains are shown above is that of Vermelles, a village 8 km. north-west of Lens and 6 km. south-west of La Bassée. This place figured in the news on many occasions, but can hardly have seen any happenings more dramatic than those which centred round its château toward the end of 1914. The Germans had occupied Vermelles, lost it, and reoccupied it, all before the end of October; then, in the closing days of November, the French made a valiant effort to recover the château. In this they were successful (December 1st), but not before several days had passed with themselves established on the ground floor of the building, and the enemy both upstairs and in the cellars. Truly a remarkable situation.

Division had its 66th Brigade on the left below the "Pip" Ridge, plus the 12th Lancashire Fusiliers of the 65th holding "Whaleback" in front of it; the rest of the 65th being in reserve, and the 67th in corps reserve, with the 8th Mounted Brigade in Army reserve.

Zero hour, following three days' intensive bombardment, was 9.45 p.m. —and early in the morning a Bulgar deserter broke the cheerful news that his battalion had been warned to expect an attack about 8 p.m.!

The official record of the subsequent proceedings makes tragic, melancholy reading. The 79th's attack on the right was an utter and costly failure. Before our troops reached their assaulting positions the enemy barraged heavily, causing loss and confusion. The right company of the 7th Wilts, scrambling out of steep Patty Ravine to storm a works mapped as 0.1, found the gaps which the artillery had made in the wire covered by machine-gun and rifle fire and partly blocked by portable wire obstacles which the Bulgars had hastily run out. A handful of men who contrived to reach the position were never seen again.

The centre company fought over the enemy's parapet and drove him out of his front trench, but was forced to withdraw for lack of flank support. The left company found the wire in front of the next works, 0.2, mainly intact, and was driven back.

Battalion Cut in Two

The 10th Devonshires, on the left of this, advancing on 0.4 and 0.5—two works on Petit Couronne—were cut in two by the barrage. Lt.-Col. T. N. Howard, with the leading companies, captured 0.4 on the eastern slope, but the two rear companies were so badly smashed by the barrage that 0.5 was never attacked, only a few men getting through to it.

The central objective of the 12th Hampshires, 0.3, was reached by only a section of the right company. Most of the others, in the darkness, turmoil, and confusion, followed the Devons up Jumeaux, where the enemy barrage crashed with terrific effect "as in an iron corridor." In the narrowest part, a hellish death-trap, they were held up. Lt.-Col. F. O. Koebel mustered the remnants of the left company in an effort to prolong the line of the right, but the enemy's fire was intolerable, and they had to fall back to the ravine—where it was worse.

Farther to the left were the 7th Royal Berkshires of the 78th Brigade, attacking a precipitous slope with three companies. The right company could not pass the barrage; the other two carried

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Photo: Keystone.

DIMINISHED IN SIZE BUT NOT IMPROVED IN STYLE

Vermelles is yet another village whose château has "shrunk" considerably as a result of the War. The new building is, indeed, no more than a pleasant country house barely qualifying for the title "mansion." The French confirmed their hold on Vermelles on December 4th, 1914, and maintained it until the British took over this part of the line the following year. Late in April, 1916, there were, as related in a previous caption, two German gas-attacks between here and Huiluch. Early 1917 saw a number of raids by both sides in this neighbourhood. There is now one British cemetery at Vermelles, used from August, 1915, until April, 1917. It contains 2,135 graves, all but 12 of which are British.

their objectives and set about consolidating them.

On their left the 11th Worcesters, advancing from Senelle ravine, came under heavy fire, but pushed on. Bombs and machine-gun fire from a circular redoubt beat back the right company; the left got into a front trench, drove off a counter-attack, cleared a communication trench at right angles, and blocked it. When supporting companies moved up there was terrible fighting here. The trenches became choked with dead and wounded.

Shortly before midnight, after two hours of battle tornado, Brig.-Gen. Poole received a message from Lt.-Col. Howard, of the 10th Devons, stating that two companies were isolated in 0.4, nothing was known of the other two, and the situation would be serious if the enemy counter-attacked from 0.5. Two companies of the 8th D.C.L.I. were accordingly moved up to support Howard.

"Where are you, Devons?"

The commander of the leading company, approaching the enemy position, shouted out "Where are you, Devons?" and received the reply "Here!" But immediately the company moved forward it was met by a burst of fire. The second company, advancing in three waves, ran into the leading one, which was retiring. There was confusion, and the commander ordered his men back to their own lines, believing the Devons had retired.

In the shell-rent smoke and gloom, Jumeaux and adjacent ravines were a muddle of men, a shambles of dead and wounded. Divisional H.Q. was ignorant of the fate of our troops at several points; they just went forward—some of them—and were swallowed in the dark. Deciding that 0.2 was a serious gap in the attack, H.Q. at 12.30 a.m. ordered the 12th Argyll & Sutherlands to move up from the Doiran—Kilindir road, two miles back, and attack it.

They were not familiar with the front, and when at last they reached it they found the trenches blocked with wounded and carrying parties. It was 4 a.m. before they were ready; the assault was then cancelled after one company, which failed to get the message, had moved into No Man's Land.

Just before this hour two battalions of the 78th Brigade had fallen back, leaving only the two "lost" Devon companies on Petit; then these had to

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RELICS OF ANOTHER AGE

The skulls which the officers in this photograph are holding up to view are not those of friends or foes killed in the War, but relics of the ancient city of Amphipolis. This ancient Thracian town was captured by Athenians about 436 B.C., and thereafter passed successively to Sparta, Macedon, and Rome. Coins found with the skulls have been identified as belonging to about 10 B.C.

retire, in order to reach their own trenches before dawn. Thus the whole attack of the 26th Division had been broken; and after daylight, when the enemy artillery fire slackened, it remained only for doctors and stretcher-bearers to stumble bravely out into that devilish, nightmare Jumeaux ravine and try to bring in what wounded they could.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SORTING MAIL

A field post office, belonging to the Salonica force, photographed in 1917. Postal arrangements on this front were carried out on much the same system as in France and Belgium, simplified, of course, by the much smaller area and quantity of mail involved. Censorship was conducted on the usual lines, and there was the customary abortive hankering after the precious "green envelope" not liable to unit inspection.

Some of the rescuers were fired on; others were allowed to proceed with the humane work after an enemy officer had jumped on his parapet waving a blue flag and the batteries had been ordered to withhold fire. One of our men was actually allowed to go through a gap in the enemy wire and rescue a comrade lying only 10 yards from the Bulgar parapet.

Hill 380 and "Pip 4½"

Meantime, the 66th Brigade, on the left, had moved against Hill 380, a horseshoe-shaped work on a position called Mamelon, and a small wired-in redoubt on "Pip 4½," the Bulgar front-line spur of the Pip ridge. At 8.50 p.m. a platoon of the 13th Manchesters occupied P. 5, an outpost within the enemy wire in front of P. 4½, and came under a heavy barrage.

At zero, 9.45, six companies of the brigade—which included the 8th King's Shropshire L.I., a company of the 9th Border Regt. (Pioneers) attached to each battalion as a wiring party, sections of the 66th Machine Gun Company, and of the 100th Field Company, R.E.—crossed the enemy parapets with little resistance. By 10 p.m. the two battalions had established themselves; the wiring parties were ordered forward.

Counter-attacks against P. 4½ were driven off. But shortly after the second, at 4.15 a.m., news came that the Worcestershires of the 78th Brigade had withdrawn from 0.6, thus leaving the right flank in the air. Another counter-attack against a company of K.S.L.I. in Jackson Ravine, behind Mamelon, was also driven off. The left half of the general attack had therefore gone in our favour, but it was of little advantage while the right half crumpled.

The day of the 25th was marked by bursts of fire from the enemy, and, at 7.30 p.m., heavy artillery strafes on Jackson, P. 4½, and 380, followed by resolute counter-attacks, which were again driven off. Success on this left half was due to our troops pushing on and establishing a line, not in the captured positions, but well beyond them; failure on the right to the accurate and terrific enemy fire on Jumeaux, especially from a German 150-mm. naval battery, whose shells burst with devastating effect in the deep, rocky corridor.

At one juncture an officer saw a number of men leaning against the wall of the ravine, as if resting, and hurried up to urge them forward. He found

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From CROISILLES to VAULX

Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE DESCENT INTO CROISILLES

This is a fairly large village, standing on the north bank of the River Sensée, just over 12 km. south-east of Arras. It is on the direct railway from Arras to Cambrai, and about halfway between the Arras–Cambrai and Arras–Bapaume roads. Croisilles was in enemy hands until April 2nd, 1917, when it was carried with eight other villages north of the line Bapaume–Cambrai. A British attack was launched from the place on April 9th. In this photograph a horse-ambulance and a stranded tank are seen on September 13th, 1918.

Photo: Keystone

ON THE BROW OF THE HILL

Croisilles had to be evacuated again on March 22nd, 1918, after which the enemy held it until August 28th. Troops of the 56th Division were involved in heavy fighting here during the days preceding the final recapture, making important progress, especially on the high ground known as Hénin Hill. The tank seen in the upper picture had been rendered useless by shell-fire on August 24th. To-day there are two British cemeteries at Croisilles, begun on April 2nd, 1917, by the 2nd Queen's Regt. and 21st Manchester Regt. respectively. More than 1,388 dead rest therein.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

THEN—THE RUMBLE OF LORRIES

The village of Écoust-St. Mein lies approximately 10 km. north-north-east of Bapaume, and is almost equidistant from St. Léger, on its western side, and Bullecourt, on its eastern. The corners seen in these photographs are two of the sharp bends taken by the Bapaume–Croisilles road where it joins with the routes converging on Croisilles from Douai, Lagnicourt, Vaulx-Vraucourt, and Mory. Écoust-St. Mein was among the positions captured from the enemy on April 2nd, 1917, by the 4th Australian and 7th Divisions. The Battle of Arras therefore found it just within our lines.

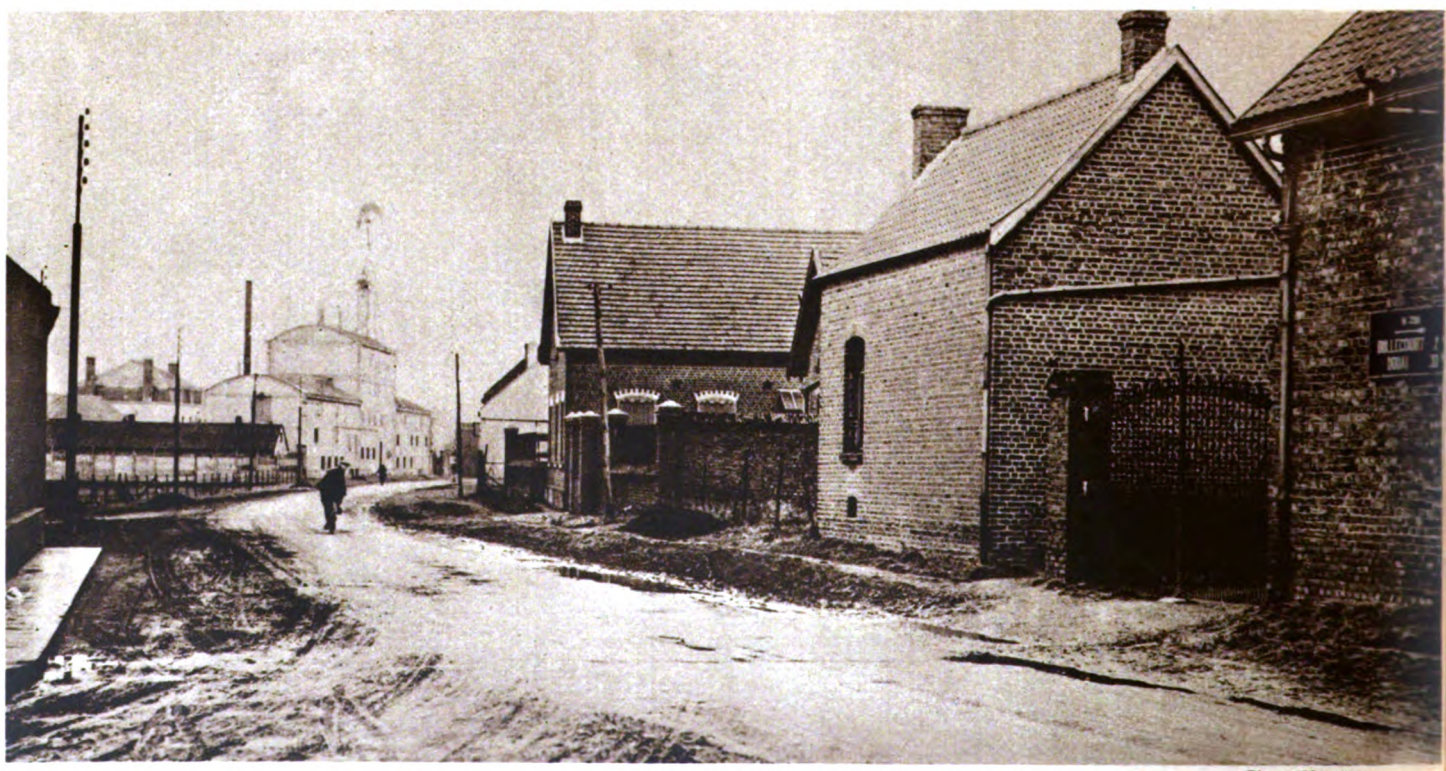

Photo: Keystone

NOW—THE RATTLE OF A BICYCLE

Captured by the 7th Division in a blizzard on April 2nd, 1917, Écoust-St. Mein fell once more to the foe, despite a heroic defence by the 2/6th North Staffs. Regt. and others, on March 21st, 1918. Its final re-storming, which took place at the end of August, 1918, was the work of the 3rd Division. To-day four British cemeteries are attached to the village, containing in all 1,920 U.K., 171 Australian, 41 New Zealand, 35 Canadian, 71 German, and 145 Unknown fallen. One of these cemeteries stands close to the embankment held in March, 1918, by the North Staffs., many of whom, including their C.O., lie buried in it.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

WOUNDED AND IN ENEMY HANDS

A scene photographed in the Noreuil Valley on May 12th, 1917, when a batch of wounded German prisoners, followed by others in Australian Red Cross carts, was marching along the bleak road leading from the line. Noreuil lies 3 km. south-east of Écoust-St. Mein, on the route from there to Lagnicourt. Like Écoust, it was first captured by the Allies on April 2nd, 1917, when it fell to the Australians; like Écoust, too, it passed back to the Germans on March 21st, 1918. On December 12th, 1917, Noreuil was heavily shelled to hinder the sending up of supports.

Photo: Keystone

THE LONG, LONG TRAIL TO-DAY

During the enemy's retirement on the Hindenburg Line in 1917, British cavalry established touch with him at Nurlu, Bertincourt, Hénin-sur-Cojeul, and Noreuil, on March 19th. After the recapture of Noreuil by the Germans just a year later, the village remained in their hands until late August. To-day there is one War cemetery within the village bounds, an Australian one used from April to December, 1917, and again in September, 1918. It contains 182 Australian and 64 United Kingdom dead. Noreuil, which stands on the Hirondelle, is not far from the point where the Drocourt–Quéant switch entered the Hindenburg Line.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

AT VAULX-VRAUCOURT

A party of the 2nd Australian Pioneers passing trees cut down in the above-named village by the Germans retreating to the Hindenburg Line. Vaulx-Vraucourt, 6 km. north-east of Bapaume, is in a line with that town and Noreuil, and is, indeed, the next place to Noreuil up the little Hirondelle stream. Perhaps the best work done here was on March 23rd, 1918, when the 124th Brigade of the 41st Division repulsed six separate attacks opposite the village. Vaulx-Vraucourt had been captured by the enemy two days previously.

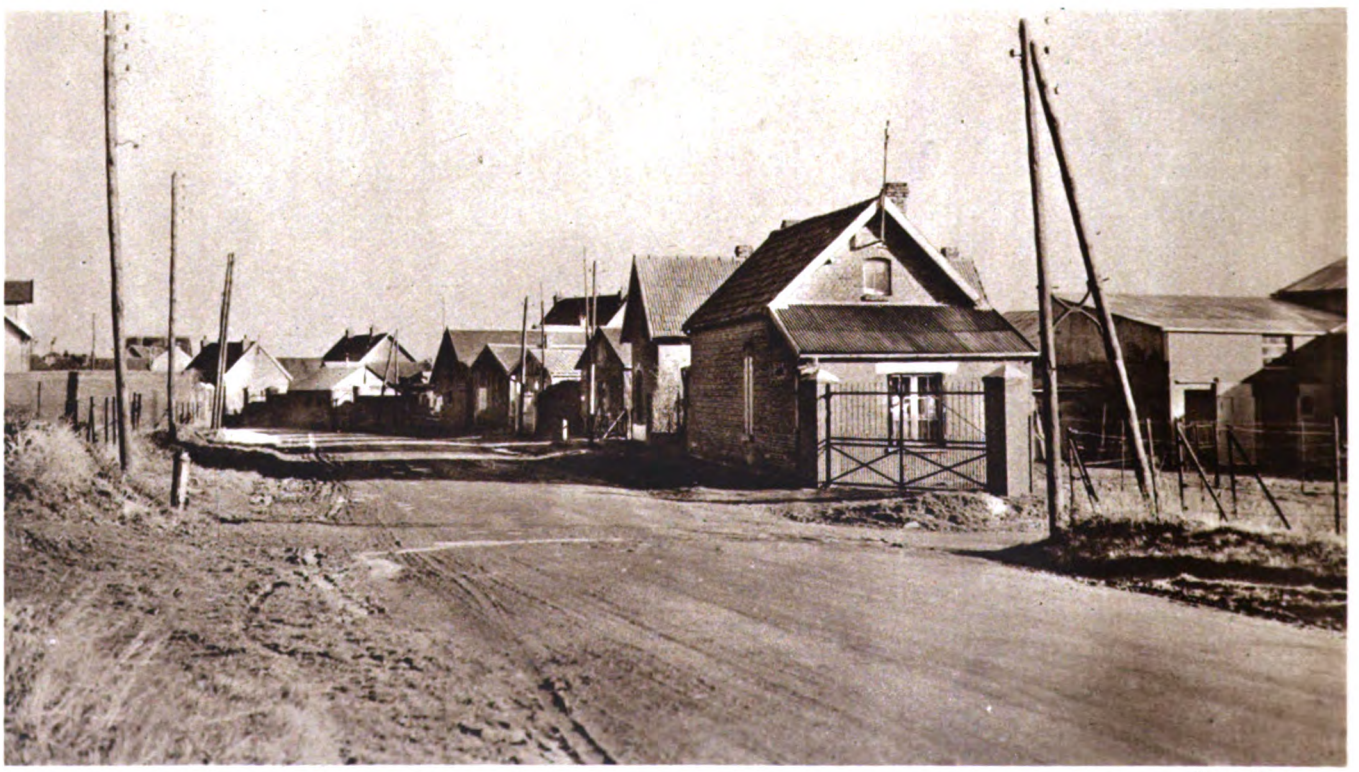

Photo: Keystone

VAULX-VRAUCOURT IN THIS YEAR OF GRACE

The village was re-entered on behalf of the Allies on September 2nd–3rd, 1918, its evacuation by the Germans being consequent upon an attack by Third Army troops. On the eve of Arras, 1917, it had been about 2 miles behind our front-line trenches. Earlier still, on November 9th, 1916, a great air-battle had been fought above it, the British machines proving victorious and bombing the village, which at the time still lay in German hands. Vaulx Hill Cemetery, Vaulx-Vraucourt, to-day records 851 U.K. and Empire burials.

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that he was shouting at corpses. All had been killed by the sheer concussion, for they were without actual wounds. A frieze of dead men. . . .

Paying Bitterly for Experience

A night-attack had been chosen, to save loss of life in crossing No Man's Land under observation from above; but the confusion in the darkness—particularly in Jumeaux—caused probably heavier losses, held up messages sent back, and impeded the handling of reserves. It was a case of paying bitterly for experience.

Farther to the left, the 2/20th London, of the 60th Division, had made, as a diversion, a sortie against a position called the Nose, where the enemy retired to his second line after repairing gaps in the wire. The first line was penetrated with the aid of a Bangalore torpedo, but trench-mortar fire under search-lights compelled the attackers to withdraw.

At 7.20 on the evening of the 26th, another severe counter-attack was launched against Hill 380, which forced back a company of the K.S.L.I. holding it. They returned, drove the enemy down the far slope, but were in turn shelled out. When the shelling abated, the K.S.L.I. and a company of 9th South Lancs. reoccupied the hill without resistance.

During the week ending April 29th, from the opening of the bombardment to the last counter-attack, the XII Corps suffered 3,163 casualties, including 16 officers and 180 other ranks killed, 92 officers and 2,271 other ranks wounded, and 27 officers and 577 other ranks missing. The 22nd Division lost only 766. Bulgar losses for April 24th and 25th only were stated to be 835. During these two days the enemy artillery fired nearly 17,500 rounds.

On May 8th another suicidal attack was launched on the same front by the 26th Division, because General Sarrail wanted support for a Franco-Serb attack west of the Vardar, and the 22nd Division line was now an acute, uncomfortable salient. In Jackson ravine, for instance, our men cowered through soaking weather, in holes without warm food or tea, and could not stand up without drawing gun and machine-gun fire.

This second attempt was planned to avoid the dreaded Jumeaux ravine, which liked not man, god, or devil, and was a ready mortuary for hapless mortals crossing it. "In the darkness of the ravine, lit only by the flashes of the explosions and obscured still further by a drifting haze of dust, it was difficult for the infantry to keep in touch," Mr. Ward Price observed. "As one looked from an artillery observation post up that dust and flame-filled gorge, it appeared impossible for anyone to get across it alive at all."

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DRAWING STUMPS

Not, as the title might imply, a dental or cricket operation, but the extraction of tree-stumps from the parent earth, in the course of making a road. A considerable amount of road-making and bridge-building had to be undertaken in Macedonia, and on many occasions—notably when the Struma was bridged to enable the capture of Barakli-Djuma, on October 31st, 1916—the co-operation of the R.E. proved vital to an infantry success.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CHIEF GREETS CHIEF

A Scottish guard of honour is inspected (January, 1917), by General Milne and Field-Marshal Mishitch. The latter, a Serb, had been in command of his country's Second Army at the outbreak of war, and, after taking part in the gallant resistance with which the Serbs met the invader, had been in supreme command during the famous retreat of 1915. In 1916 it was he who captured Monastir, and in September, 1918, he helped in Bulgaria's overthrow.

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Tragedy Repeated

Only holding assaults were to be made left, or west, of the ravine, the 77th Brigade concentrating against the positions on the lake side of it which had resisted the previous attack—0.1, 0.2, 0.3—while the 78th stood ready to storm Petit Couronne, that irresistible magnet, two-and-a-half hours after zero.

It was the same tragic story over again. The two leading companies of the 11th Scottish Rifles on the right suffered heavy loss in reaching their objective, and then were driven out, the supporting company losing touch in the smoke, dust, and din. Not until 2.15 a.m. did news of their fate reach battalion H.Q., from a company commander who staggered back to report complete failure.

In the centre, the 12th Argyll & Sutherlands entered the enemy's front line, bombed him out of dug-outs, pushed on to the final objective, were there isolated and enfiladed owing to failure on the flanks, lost all their officers as casualties, and, after half an hour's fighting, withdrew. Brigade H.Q. knew nothing of the grim time they were having against heavy odds, for again communication was broken.

On the left the 10th Black Watch right company was held up by wire in Wylye ravine leading to the foot of Petit; the left company was delayed and lost in the barrage, and driven out of the Bulgar trenches soon after reaching them. Supports such as the 8th Royal Scots Fusiliers were held up either by wire in dark ravines, or by shelling in congested communication-trenches.

Unnecessary Waiting

Three companies of the 7th Ox. & Bucks. L.I. had been ordered to attack 0.4, the big work on Petit, at 12.20 a.m., with a reserve carrying-company and two platoons of their 8th (Pioneers). Ninety minutes before time they left their trenches, crossed Jumeaux ravine quickly, with few casualties, and formed in waves on the slope of Petit with 45 minutes to spare! During that long, unnecessary wait they lost heavily under trench-mortar barrage, and Major Homan, the commander, evidently decided anything was better than remaining there until the appointed time, for at 11.57 Lt.-Col. Howard, the brigade commander, received a message from him: "Am going through in ten minutes."

Fearing the artillery programme could

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AGOG WITH ACTIVITY

Cartigny is a smallish village lying 7½ km. south-east of Péronne, on the left bank of the little River Cologne. The Péronne—Cambrai railway line runs past here, and Cartigny itself is built about a double crossroads. Westward, routes lead to Péronne and Le Mesnil; eastward, to Hancourt and Bernes; north-eastward, to Brusle and Bouchy; and north-westward, to Buire, Tincourt, and other places on the northern side of river and railway. Despite all these arteries, however—and none of them is a major or even an important secondary route—little of interest happened at Cartigny during the War. Our photograph, taken in September, 1918, shows Australians repairing road-damage.

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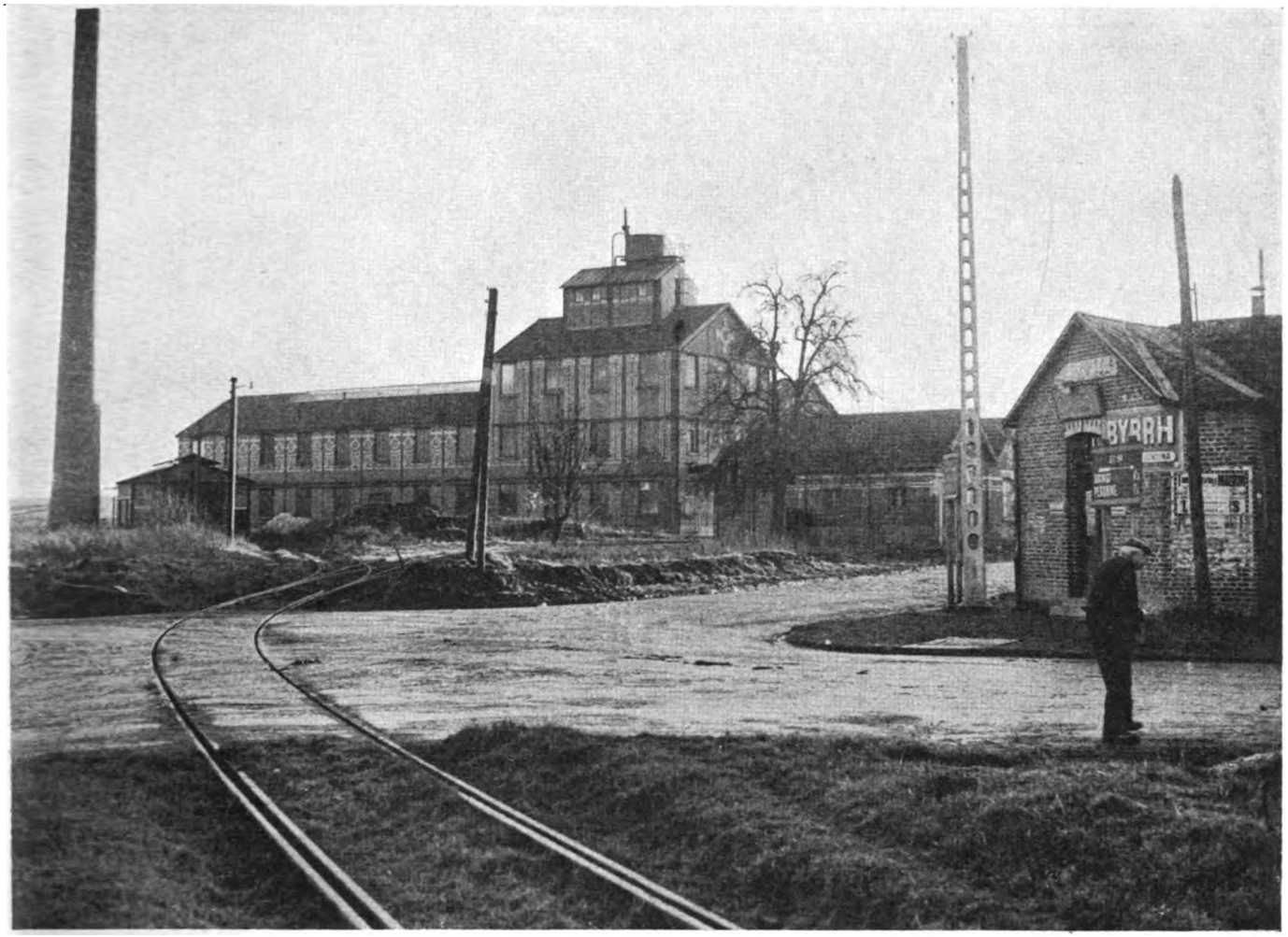

Photo: Keystone.

IN THE GRIP OF INDUSTRY ONCE MORE

Having fallen into our hands at the time of the great German withdrawal in 1917, Cartigny was recovered by the enemy on March 22nd, 1918. It was regained early in September following, and thereafter speedily found itself farther and farther behind the line. To-day industry has reclaimed it, and only the newness of the factories, the inevitable presence of a French War Memorial, and the sad little cluster of British graves in the communal cemetery, serve to remind one that a war was ever fought hereabouts.

not be revised at such short notice, Howard replied: "You must stick to programme and go in at 'B' hours [12.20], not before." Homan died of wounds after the action, so it is not known whether the message was received too late; but at 12.13 a.m. an artillery observing officer reported the attack had been launched. Orders were sent for the guns to be switched off, but, according to survivors, shells from British heavies pitched into 0.4 even after 12.20, causing loss and panic among Homan's ill-starred men.

Nearly all the company officers were wounded advancing up the slope, and 2nd-Lieut. C. P. Ker took command until Major Wheeler hurried up to relieve him. The battalion got a foothold in one corner, and made four plucky advances from this point, but was forced back. All wires were broken, lamp-signalling was impossible in the smoke, and runners fell by the way.

With two wounded officers and 150 men, Major Wheeler clung to his corner, resisting every enemy effort to push him down the hill, until two companies of the 7th Royal Berks. went across Jumeaux to his aid and found his little force about fifty yards below it.

Later, Lt.-Col. Deane, commanding the Berkshires, led a third company up to Petit, and at 5 a.m., after half-an-hour's bombardment, attacked with the two companies already there and the remnants of the Ox. & Bucks. Almost the whole of 0.4 was carried with the aid of these battered survivors, and a bombing-party fought half-way along a communication-trench leading to 0.5.

A Valiant Brotherhood

The Bulgars put down a heavy bombardment on 0.4, not sparing even their own defenders, and a counter-attack from 0.5 forced our men back; but by 8 a.m. on the 9th they had established a line across the centre of the work, and about 250 men clung there, menaced by enemy works on either side. All through the morning one could see them, on the upper slope, moving about desperately, helping the wounded; while from time to time small parties would struggle to the shell-scarred summit and be blown off it by enemy shell-fire.

Colonel Deane was wounded, and his relief, Lt.-Col. Robinson, mortally so. When Maj.-Gen. Gay, at 11.50 a.m., ordered this valiant brotherhood to withdraw, Capt. Pike of the Berkshires took command, sending his men in parties of 12 down Tor ravine. All but four of the wounded were brought back, besides bombs and other material. Capt. Bryce, the M.O., and one of his sergeants, carried wounded even from the summit.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE HOUR OF SIESTA

Men of the Border Regiment taking a rest—no doubt well enough earned—in and above the "funk holes" of a front-line trench in the Thiepval Wood area, August, 1916. Thiepval, it will be recalled, was not taken until the month following, but continual advances in the neighbourhood were made by us during August.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CONVERTED TO A NEW PURPOSE

A salvaged sewing-machine forms a convenient writing-desk for a soldier at Fampoux, July 31st, 1917. At this time—the date is that which saw the opening of our new Flanders attack—the attention of both sides was concerned mainly with Belgium, and all was quiet here in the Arras sector. Note the Divisional sign on the writer's helmet.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

ZULU WAR-DANCE

Conditions were strange and unhappy enough for the Allies' coloured auxiliaries on the Western Front, and the authorities did all in their power to brighten things. Here we see a South African Native Labour Corps group being allowed to cheer itself up with a war-dance at Dannes, on June 24th, 1917. The dance was part of a sports programme.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

A STUDY IN ANATOMY

Respite from the lice ; a vast concourse of bathers disporting themselves in the broad but shallow estuary of the River Canche at Étaples, June 18th, 1917. "Eatapples" itself lies on the northern shore ; on the southern, at the extreme mouth of the river, is situated the well-known French seaside resort, Paris-Plage, beloved of children for its sands.

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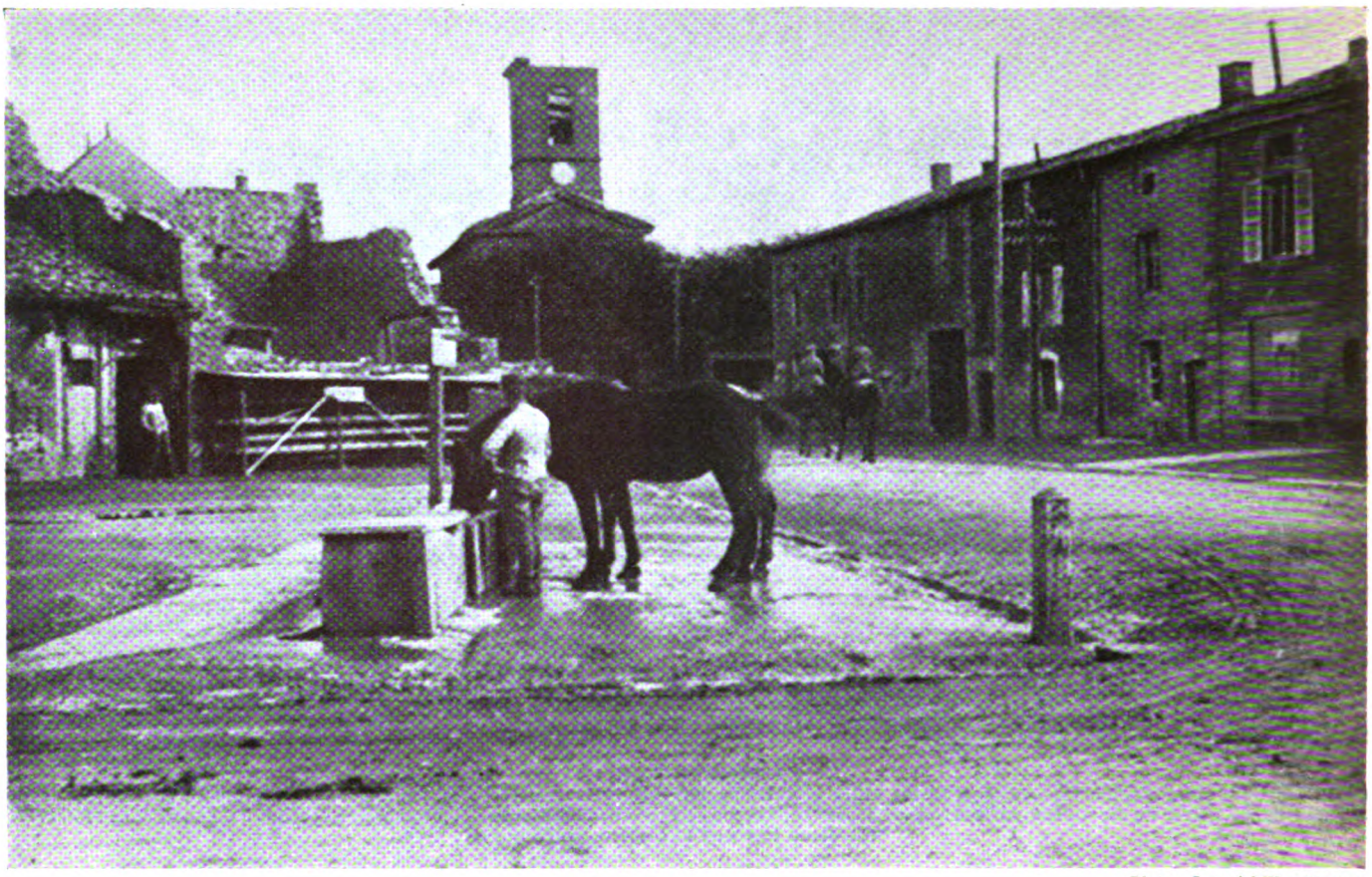

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION

A photograph of Loison-sous-Lens during the German occupation of it, which endured through nearly the whole of the War. This suburb lies on the north-eastern side of the town proper, about 3 km. distant. It is reached by a secondary road branching off the Lens—Lille highway just outside Lens, and in point of fact lies in the fork made by this highway and that which connects Lens with Douai. From the British point of view this was, of course, on the inaccessible side of the town.

During that night of ordeal further desperate attacks had been made on positions between Petit and the Lake, but they evaporated in helplessness, misunderstandings, and confusion. The bombardment for one new attack had to be postponed, because the deploying infantry were not ready. Different commanders had different times for attack, varying by nearly an hour-and-a-half. Trenches were blocked. Platoons straggled and got out of touch. Troops falling back from one fruitless assault barged into others deploying in No Man's Land for another assault, and willy-nilly swept them back.

Worcesters ordered to attack at 5.50 sent back word that they could not see the other troops supposed to be on their flank, and that the wire on their objective—0.3—was uncut; also, that they were so heavily shelled that they could not form up, and it was now growing light. So they were ordered to fall back.

All the time the flanking Scots Fusiliers had been there, all right, hidden behind a low ridge.... And though the Worcesters' attack was called off, the 9th Gloucesters went forward to 0.2, the next work, punctually to the minute, found the trenches manned only by Bulgar dead, came under fire from 0.1, which the Scottish Rifles had not attacked, and so withdrew.

Stark, Unmitigated Hell

Says the Official Historian[1] of this night's work, and the ultimate retirement from Petit: "The heart-breaking action, marked by so many brave deeds and so many deplorable errors, so much good will and so much confusion, was at an end."

General Milne ascribed the failure, as in the previous attack, mainly to lack of information and delay in using reserves. No one, however, who knew that front will want to blame any who bore the brunt of the ill-success. In those dark ravines, on those exposed hill-works, it was sheer, stark, unmitigated hell, and would still have been so had men the nerves of cattle.

When the Bulgar "sat pretty" on those heights at the end of 1915 he knew what he was doing; he turned them into an impregnable fortress against which the waves of British attack were doomed to break in vain—even in the autumn of 1918, when the enemy's flank was crumpling and he saw omens of utter defeat.

The 65th Brigade, 22nd Division, which had to demonstrate on the left against work 0.6, the Sugar Loaf ridge, and P. 4 of the Pip Ridge, with parties of 8th S. Wales Borderers, 9th King's Own Royal Lancs., and 12th Lancashire Fusiliers, achieved their general aim without much success in the actual operations. It was mainly a matter of rushing the enemy's position, staying there for a short time, and then withdrawing—under heavy barrage.

The Borderers were caught by a searchlight from Grand Couronne and a trench-mortar barrage; they remained in 0.6 only ten minutes. The Sugar Loaf party could not get far, but drew artillery fire from the 26th Division. The patrol against "Doldzeli L," after passing through a shelled copse, the

[1] *Military Operations, Macedonia*, ii.

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Corne du Bois, also encountered the searchlight and mortar fire some 350 yards from the enemy trench. That directed against P. 4 met about 150 Bulgars in the open, drove in a bombing party, and withdrew without loss.

A Dummy Trench System

The 67th Brigade—7th S. Wales Borderers and 11th Royal Welch Fusiliers, with a section of Sappers—reached the outskirts of Krastali village unopposed, but withdrew after coming under heavy fire. Incessant shelling made it difficult to consolidate an advanced ridge called Roachback, but the troops worked with great courage and energy to construct before dawn a system of dummy trenches on the forward slope—to draw enemy fire by day and serve as outposts at night—as well as a real fire trench on the reverse.

Farther to the left, the 179th Brigade, 60th Division, advanced on Goldies Hill without opposition, consolidated it during the night, and repulsed a counter-attack before dawn on the 10th.

Our losses on the night of May 8th were 1,861—1,743 of them 26th Division, which had thus lost 3,888 in the two attacks, including 75 killed. The Bulgar losses this night were given as 489; 28,874 enemy projectiles were fired, and there were some 130 further casualties during the following four days' bombardment.

In this Doiran battle, the *Official History* records, the Bulgar showed himself a courageous and resourceful fighter, especially with bomb and bayonet; and General Milne admitted that he was superior in hill fighting. Our men felt no hatred of him, as sometimes of the Boche, generally regarding him as a sporting opponent.

On the Struma, between May 12th and 21st, troops of the 10th and 28th Divisions pushed forward, under artillery cover, to Prosenik, Kyupri, Bairakli, and other outposts. After the capture of Kyupri, some Bulgars crept forward to counter-attack, with sheaves of corn tied round them and tufts stuck in their caps for camouflage.

Our barrage caught them 150 yards from the British works; their officers could be heard urging them on, but they got into a panic, and fled in disorder to hide in the crops. In one outpost at Kyupri five of our men were killed, and an officer and 11 men wounded, in a platoon 28 strong, which was so heavily shelled that the wounded could not be removed. It showed remarkable courage and endurance under the leadership of 2nd-Lieut. Burkett.

The Offensive Terminated

On the 21st, Sarrail terminated the whole offensive, which had cost the Allies 14,000 casualties with little gain, provoked some friction between them, and induced the Serbs to resolve not to bear the brunt of the fighting again. This force had been disturbed by Austrian propaganda tempting it to return to its families and farms, and by machinations of the "Black Hand" secret society, which led to many senior officers being relieved of their command. Meanwhile Bolshevism had permeated the Russian Division.

In June, 1917, Constantine was dethroned and succeeded by his son Alexander; Venizelos became president of the Council of Ministers; and Greece joined the Allies.

With the failure of the spring offensive the British Government had virtually given up Macedonia as a bad job, and formulated a Palestine campaign largely

Photo: Keystone.

LOISON: CHURCH AND CINEMA

A corner of the Lens suburb showing where some of the present-day toilers in that busy town are wont to seek their inspiration. There is little to say about the military history of the place during its long term in enemy hands. Many of the German troops engaged in fighting at or near Lens—for example, in the Battle of Loos, 1915—passed along one or other of the main roads flanking Loison; and as a rest-billet just out of the line it must have been as well known to our late enemies as were similar places to our own men.

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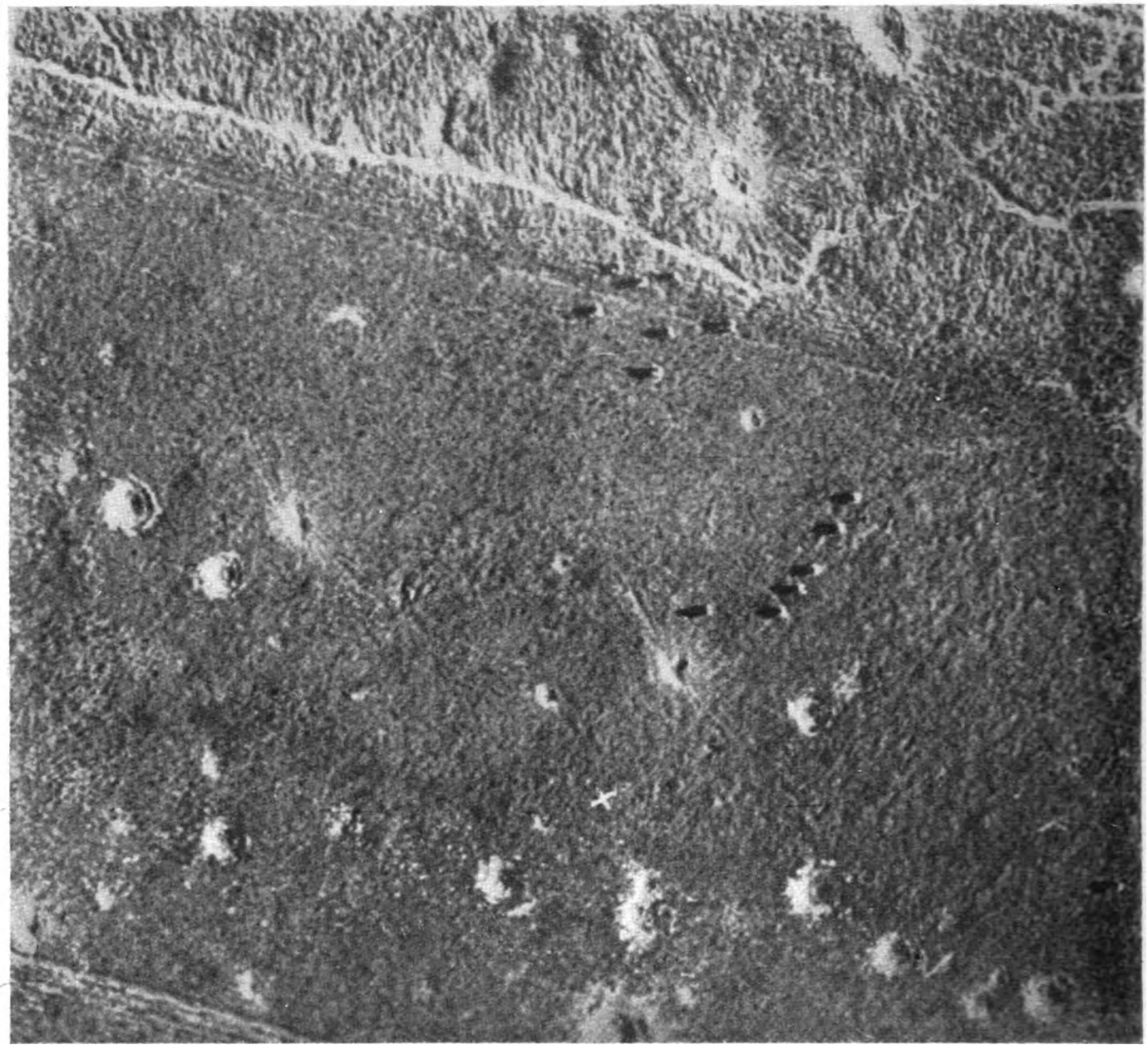

ADVANCING TO THE ATTACK—
This interesting aerial study, which—adapting once more an earlier expedient—we have cut in half, that it may be reproduced as large as possible, shows troops advancing during an attack made approximately one mile south-west of Albert on July 25th, 1918. The date is somewhat prior to the start of our final offensive, and the greatest Western Front activity was taking place in the French and American sectors to the south of the British. Certain raiding activities, however, were in process in the Albert area, and the attack here depicted represents one of them.

at the expense of our Balkan troops. The 60th Division, 7th and 8th Mounted Brigades—less Derbyshire Yeomanry—209th Siege Battery, and a section of the 292nd, were shipped to Egypt, to be followed later by the 10th Division and more heavies. The Allied forces, excluding British, now comprised 18 divisions; eight French, six Serbian, two Greek, one Italian, one Russian.

During June the British XVI Corps and the right of the XII evacuated, for the hot season, the malarial Struma and Butkovo valleys, withdrawing to the hills. The removal of material across the Struma occupied three weeks, one division alone moving 2,000 waggon-loads. Cavalry and cyclists patrolled the plain daily, through tall grass, scrub, and thistles, in blinding heat, and under risk of ambush, to ensure that the enemy did not occupy the abandoned positions.

The War on Mosquitoes

The troops were dosed with quinine against malaria; in the worst areas streams were canalised, marshes drained, pools oiled, and underbrush burnt, to prevent mosquito-breeding. Both nets and mosquito-proof huts were used wherever possible, and sentries were provided with gloves and masks. Even so, by the end of August there were 18,000 troops in hospital, mostly with malaria; by mid-October, nearly 21,500—the worst sufferers being shipped to Corfu to convalesce. Behind the lines the order was for rest during the hottest hours, with work in the early morning and late afternoon.

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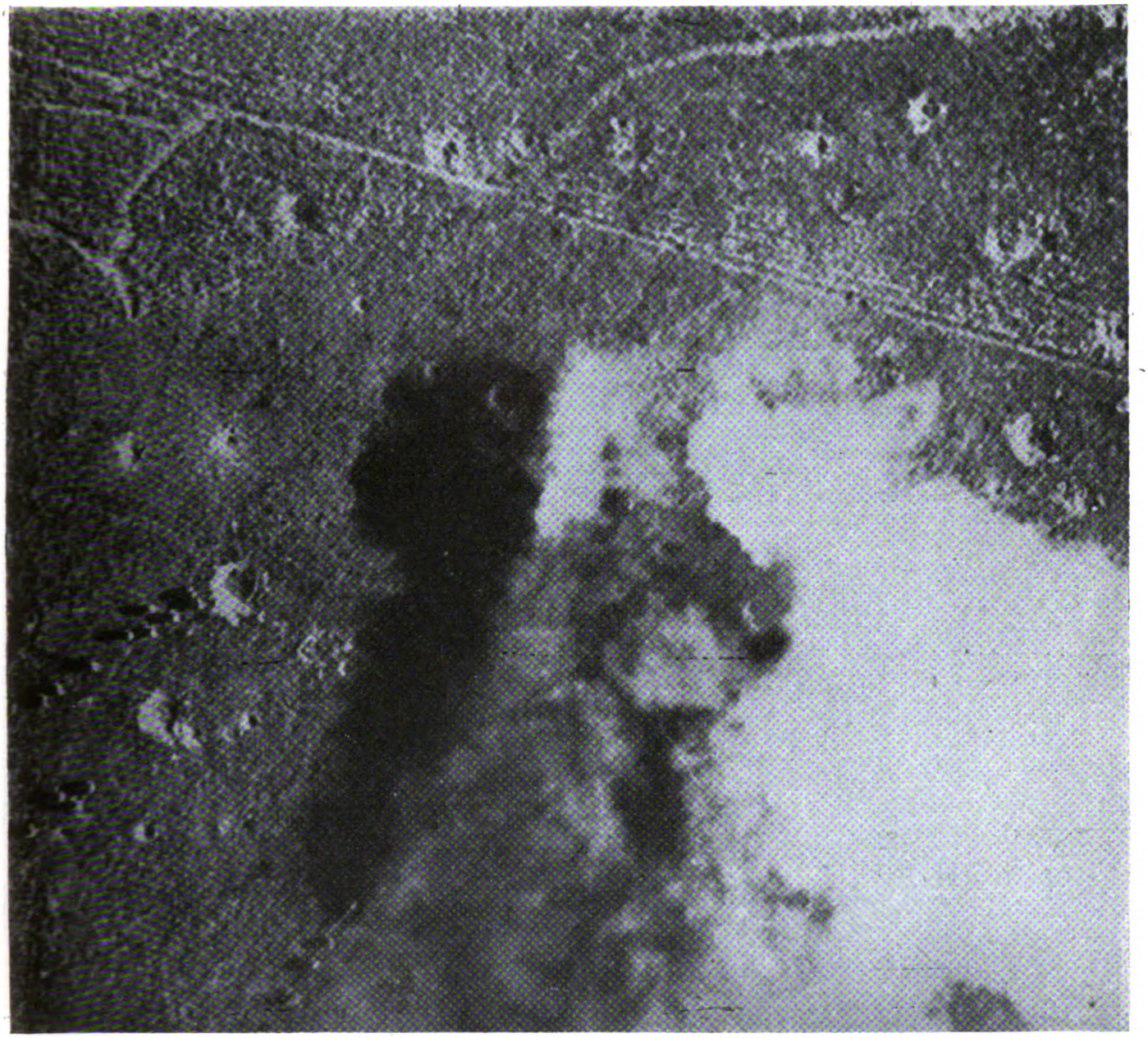

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

—DURING A SKIRMISH NEAR ALBERT

A number of minor raids were being conducted between Albert and the Somme on or about the date of this photograph. On July 25th, under cover of a bombardment, the New Zealanders were able to push forward their line in the Hébuterne sector, and on the 26th German attacks both here and at Aveluy, north of Albert, were met and successfully frustrated. Near Albert itself another raid was made by us on July 27th, when the Arras and Lens regions also witnessed activity. All this while our artillery was severely harassing the Germans.

During the comparative lull on the Struma the British love of sport, in a country which offered scope for it, began to find expression. Horse-shows were held behind the lines—the 27th Division show at Juma Mahale lasted three days, and was visited by Generals Sarrail and Milne, Navy personnel from the Base, hospital sisters escorted by officers, and guests from other parts of the front, while planes circled overhead in case the enemy raided.

Generally, however, the Bulgar looked on these diversions with a tolerant and even amused eye, permitting football to be played within range of his field batteries. If any attempt was made to carry out drill or other military exercises, however, over came a warning shell. In one instance he sent over word that, while sport was welcome in a certain field, training was barred.

The Salonica Army even had its hunts. Lt.-Col. Pleydell-Railston, commanding the dismounted Scottish Horse, 27th Division, formed a pack of hounds, with the help of the divisional commander, Maj.-Gen. Forestier-Walker. English Hunts made gifts of a few couples, but alas! officers returning from leave could not get them past the R.T.O. Eventually a dozen couples of a "rough but useful type of harrier" were collected to provide sport with fox and hare. Hounds met every Saturday afternoon, "war permitting," and fields often numbered a hundred.

They Did not Mind Hunting

Higher up the Struma, on the 28th Division Front, another pack of beagles and harriers was hunted by Major

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W. H. Brooke, 1st K.O.Y.L.I. "More than once," the *Official History* states, "these hounds, hunting between the river and the line of redoubts beyond the west bank, ran full cry through the enemy's wire; but on each occasion they returned within 36 hours—proof, it would appear, that the Bulgarians had not absorbed the doctrine of unlimited ferocity in war."

Shooting snipe and duck in the marshes, and partridges and hares on the plains and hills, sometimes led to strange encounters, as in this one recorded by Mr. Ward Price:

"There was an officer of Yeomanry on the Struma who went out before dawn one day for the morning flight of geese to a place he had noticed when on patrol between the lines. While lying up there he saw with consternation three Bulgars with rifles in their hands advancing through the reeds. Was it a patrol that had seen him go in, and was bent on capturing him? He tried to move off as inconspicuously as possible, but the Bulgars saw him, and immediately dropped their rifles and put up their hands. The situation having taken this agreeable turn, the officer decided that there was no need to interrupt his morning's sport, so he kept his prisoners waiting until he had shot three geese and two duck, and then made them carry them in for him."

To relieve the monotony, concert-parties were organised on a big scale for the production of revues, pantomimes, and even musical comedies and plays. The XII Corps area, for example, boasted two brick theatres and one of wood. At Rates, behind the Doiran front, the 22nd Division Concert Party eventually staged a sumptuous production of *The Chocolate Soldier*—a Shavian satire on Balkan militarism!—with a female impersonator of rare charm and talent singing the famous "My Hero" song falsetto, and Derek Oldham playing the Chocolate Gallant admirably—and occasionally Nadina for a change.

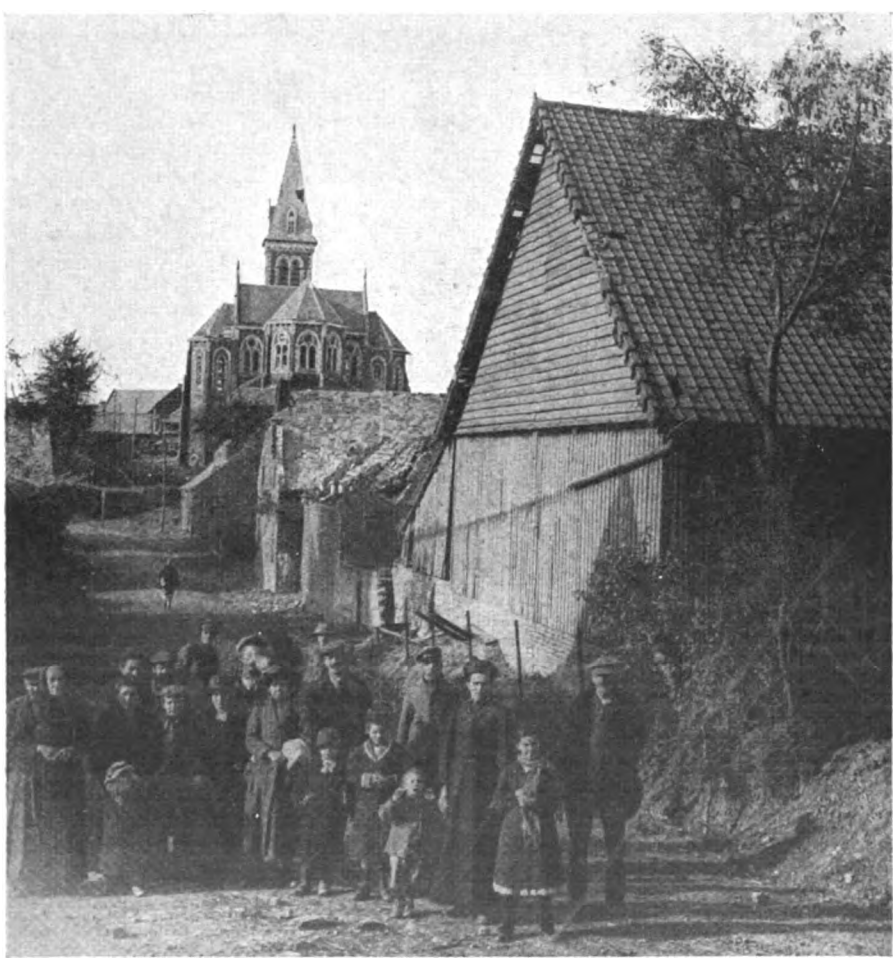

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PEASANTS OF BRANCOURT

The village of Brancourt-le-Grand lies some way to eastward of the main theatre of war, being situated 5 km. west-south-west of Bohain, and nearly half-way, as the crow flies, from St. Quentin to Le Cateau. In common with many other places occupied by the enemy and kept behind his lines for the greater part of the Four Years, it was not denuded of its legitimate inhabitants; and this photograph shows a group of the population the day after the Allies had liberated Brancourt from the invader in October, 1918.

A Courtly Macedonian

Mr. V. J. Seligman—in *The Salonica Side Show*—recalls that in *Slip Your Clutch*, an M.T. Coy. revue, a comedian dressed as a Greek labour-gang foreman sang a hilarious song, "Idey, Johnny!" to the tune of "The Rag-Picker." When the show came to Guvezne, someone had a brain-wave and shoved a real labour-corps Greek into the part.

"An elderly man with white whiskers, of venerable and dignified appearance, he trod the boards with that impressive stateliness which can only be acquired by ten years' study of the part of Hamlet. His dress and cap, multi-coloured as the trench-coat affected by Joseph, modified the austerity of his demeanour.... Suddenly he discarded his cap and his dignity, as, with an unmistakable wink at the delighted audience, he advanced gallantly towards the leading 'lady' and kissed her hand. ... Encircling her slim waist with mid-Victorian courtesy and his right arm, he accompanied her in a Macedonian gavotte. Then with the same old-world grace he took leave of his partner, and danced by himself. Never have I seen an audience so convulsed with laughter....

"For six nights Heracles played the part of foreman to delirious audiences... The Bulgars, who had heard of him (as they hear of most things), deserted in their thousands in the hopes of catching a glimpse of this astounding man. And then at the end of the week Heracles retired from the stage for ever, back to the Seres road, where you may see him to this day breaking stones—with a far-away look in his eyes."

No wonder the British win wars against difficult odds. They have a genius for taking the fun of Leicester Square into the most desolate hinterlands. They know that in war, as in peace, "all work and no play, etc...." The fame of a panto song, "Boris the Bulgar," spread even to the enemy, who translated the verses and posted them outside the trenches of the 28th Division with a request for the music!

Songs *v.* Poison Gas

One of these days songs will exercise more power than poison gas; then the only wars will be choral ones, one side challenging the other to vocal combat—and it will be a walk-over for ex-Balkan Tommies every time....

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Photo: Keystone.

WITH WARFARE ALL FORGOTTEN

The credit for capturing Brancourt-le-Grand on October 8th, 1918, belongs to the 30th American Division, operating between the British 6th and 25th Divisions. The 30th was one of America's best infantry divisions, and at about the time of the capture of Brancourt was also responsible for taking Prémont, a few kilometres farther north. Nowadays a tiny British cemetery is to be found at Brancourt, containing 41 United Kingdom graves, all dating from the last few weeks of the War.

Other things happened during the summer of 1917. R.F.C. and R.N.A.S. machines bombed the Bulgar rear almost daily, 15 machines dropping over 3,000 lb. of explosive on August 11th as retaliation for an enemy raid on Thasos aerodrome. In August the Bulgars brought three field howitzers to Kalendra Wood and bombarded an advance aerodrome near Orliak Bridge, destroying two of six machines, damaging another, and burning a hangar.

On July 22nd the 1st Royal Scots, 81st Brigade, raided Homondos village with two companies of the 13th Black Watch and a squadron of Surrey Yeomanry, and the Bulgars were bombed out after desperate fighting among the houses. P. 4½ of the Pip Ridge, Doiran, was in trouble again on August 9th when an officer and 20 men, 12th Lancashire Fusiliers, were met with a rain of bombs while inspecting artillery damage there. They closed with the enemy, bayoneted 14, took prisoners, and returned with only one man missing.

Here, too, on the 30th, the Fusiliers lost six in another raid, the 9th S. Lancs. raiding 0.2 and 12th Cheshires 0.6. On Dova Tepe spur, in early September, 200 to 300 Bulgars raided works of the 79th Brigade and entered trenches of the 8th D.C.L.I., but were driven out.

All through this summer there were rumours of a Bulgar offensive timed for the autumn, before the Greek forces should have become effective; and our battalions in the line were so riddled with malaria that pessimists feared the enemy could just walk through us any time he wished.

Salonica On Fire

The big event at the Base was the fire which broke out among the flimsy old houses of the Turkish quarter on August 18th, and, fanned by a "Vardar wind," quickly spread to the lower parts of the town. By the evening half the city seemed a furnace. Homeless natives thronged from the stricken parts, and were rushed in British lorries to camps on the Monastir road, or across the harbour by boat; while the Navy hosed buildings on the waterfront from lighters, and some light flaming material, blown over the water, set fire to one vessel loaded with petrol, so that the water itself appeared to be aflame.

Salonica afire was an awesome spectacle, with dense crowds massing the harbourside and quays, dense palls of smoke overhead, the crackle and roar of

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flames devouring whole streets. The port buildings were only just saved, by two British fire engines which had recently arrived. We lost our Base H.Q., post office, police barracks, and medical stores; the French Quartier-Général had to be evacuated.

The town burned fiercely the following day, and was still burning on the 20th. Then, houses having been dynamited to confine the outbreak, and the wind dropping, by the following morning one-third to half the city was found to be a smouldering ruin. Over 9,000 buildings were destroyed, 80,000 people—two-thirds of them Jews—left homeless, and £8,000,000 worth of damage done.

The Allied officers lost their comfortable club, the "Cercle des Étrangers," Floca's Café, where they had been accustomed to entertain hospital sisters to tea and recall romantic interludes way back home, and every hotel and restaurant that mattered, except the White Tower and its hectic cabaret. When the next leave-men came down the line, dreaming of Oriental delights, they found a derelict, desolate city instead of an Ægean cosmopolis. The Allies had to feed the refugees, and founded relief camps for them at Karaissi, Dudular, and Kalamaria.

In mid-October began the arduous and dangerous business of reoccupying the Struma Valley—this time for only half the distance beyond the river, since our force was so depleted. Moving out was easier than moving in, under enemy menace, through nights of drenching rain and snowstorm.

Places of Evil Omen

The advance was from Gudeli Bridge, through the villages of Agomah, Hristian Kamila, Yenikeui, Nevolyen, Elisan, and Cavdarmah to Artillery Bridge—names already associated with much grim if casual fighting. These posts—most of them so hotly contested, then abandoned to the plague of mosquitoes when summer set in with its malaria—were mainly isolated redoubts, and seemed hardly worth the holding, except for tactical purposes about which G.H.Q. was sensitive.

The 27th and 28th Divisional troops concerned were anything but happy to be moving again into that swampy, low-lying area under enemy observation, from the security and comparative comfort of the hills. The night of the 13th was doubtless suitable from the standpoint of safety, but appalling in other respects—rain all the time, then a snowstorm in the small hours. The 1st Argyll & Sutherlands, very cold and wet about the knees, occupied Hristian Kamila and the Karajakois without any untoward event, enabling batteries of the 1st Brigade R.F.A. to cross to the left bank in support. "It's a grand place—for mosquitoes and Jocks," a Sassenach observed sardonically.

An Eerie Escapade

Scottish units had to advance on Homondos and drive in the Bulgar listening-posts at a time when it was impossible to see more than ten yards ahead. As they passed isolated posts they were shot at by rifles, machine guns, and mortars; but no man spoke a word in the darkness, or shifted in the ranks. An eerie, intimidating business! At 6 a.m. on the 14th they surprised the Bulgar battalion headquarters in the village, captured 153, three machine guns, ammunition, and valuable documents, and buried 79 dead, at a cost of 11 killed, 36 wounded.

The two columns started from points three miles apart, the left having to wade streams in rain and snow. It was "night operations" at their best—to the credit of the 2nd Cameron Highlanders, 13th Black Watch (Scottish Horse), and 1st Argyll & Sutherlands concerned.

A front of three miles south of Lake Butkovo, between the 83rd and 84th Brigades, was held by a unique force, the 28th Divisional Agents: a picturesque little gang of Macedonian bandits under two British officers, who were regaled with blood-curdling stories of Balkan exploits. There was no likelihood of attack here, but every likelihood of the passing of spies at night. Hence the bandits, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief.

Occasionally the Bulgars opened fire on these fierce outlaws from boats on the lake, and they came over all heroic and excited. One fierce fellow is reputed to have said to his officer: "You—me—bandits after War finish. Plenty good business. Fifty-fifty! Yes, no?"

Advances against some of the Struma outposts had to be made by compass through treacherous wooded country. In Salmah 106 prisoners were taken in this way, and 60 to 70 killed, the three British battalions concerned losing 77, including 14 killed. A clever surrounding movement by the 2nd Cheshires of the 84th Brigade, assisted by other troops, on Butkovo Juman on December 20th, pinned the Bulgars to the village: 30 were killed and 55 taken prisoner, the Cheshire casualties being 13 wounded, some wounds being caused by the explosion of a trip-bomb as a party was returning with prisoners.

Tit for Tat

On November 4th, the 12th Argyll & Sutherlands, 77th Brigade, raided Boyau Hill, three miles east of the Vardar, after a two-days' bombardment. They found the enemy manning the trenches, and there was a fierce fight with bomb and bayonet in black darkness. All the Bulgars in the front line, with three machine-gun detachments, were killed, and the crowded communication-trenches bombed. British losses numbered 54.

On the night of the 23rd it was the Bulgars' turn. After three days' bombardment, they raided the 66th Brigade at P. 4½, and the 65th on Mamelon, in the Doiran area. One party, about 75 strong, crossed the front trench at 4½, but were then stopped and punished by machine-gun and artillery fire after they had inflicted 17 casualties on the 12th Cheshires. A 9th King's Own post had to retire from Mamelon with six wounded and four missing.

By the autumn of 1917 the Balkan armies were a weakened and depleted force. The Russian Division no longer counted; the French and Serbian ranks had been thinned, the former by leave, the latter by casualties. In December Sarrail was succeeded by General Guillaumat, and it was decided that the Allied Armies under his command should be based on the whole of Greece, and not merely on Salonica, to stop any enemy advance into that country: a function which, in point of fact, it had long been fulfilling.

Our troops, as a somewhat pathetic side-show, went on enduring hardship, suffering, and danger, and longed for home and England; and to those up the line the imitation "vamps" of the concert-parties, and the few hospital sisters who were occasionally seen at the shows as guests of officers, formed the only sentimental link with happier days.

Apart from the Blighty mail, of course. . . . The mail was always a great event for the troops in the Balkans. It had come such a long way, and wasn't too frequent, owing to the submarine menace in the Mediterranean. Also, it often suffered *en route*.

The letters, however, were a joy—and the books. A friend sent the writer Compton Mackenzie's *Guy and Pauline*; and in that story of romantic young love in old Burford and on the backwaters of the Windrush he breathed the fragrance of the England of his dreams.

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CHAPTER LIX

MEMORIES XII.—"PICKS AND SHOVELS WILL BE DRAWN"

Who does not remember fatigues and working parties? Few escaped them. Some were pleasant and some were not. In this chapter a private of the line draws upon his store of memories—memories of nearly four years of fighting and fatigues in France and Flanders.

No *wonder they call it a fatigue!* Most of us at one time or another perpetrated that mild joke. It lightened the load, if it didn't raise a laugh. Not that fatigues were consistently laborious. In England, at any rate, the ordinary fatigue was coveted as an opportunity for a "mike."

The Dictionary Version

My dictionary says: "Fatigue.... weariness after exertion; task that wearies; soldier's non-military duty."

It was the non-military aspect of fatigues which lent them their attraction. Who wouldn't rather wash the floor of the sergeants' mess than endure the monotony of squad drill? Who ever felt aggrieved at being deprived of bayonet exercise because potatoes needed peeling?

Peeling, did I say? On my last cookhouse fatigue in England I didn't peel the potatoes—I *scrubbed* them.

"Get on with it," said the corporal-cook, handing me a stiff broom. The potatoes were in a bath of water. I attacked them briskly with the broom, until the water became so muddy that they were no longer visible; but when I drained it away, the potatoes were still of the earth earthy.

Cookhouse fatigue, if my memory serves me, was not one for which we clamoured to be detailed. The cookhouse was hot and smelly, and the cutting up of clammy raw meat or the hazardous opening of innumerable tins of bully could soon degenerate from an agreeable change of occupation into a tedious task. But the cooks were a jolly crowd. They fed well: I still remember their steak and chips. And though the menial duties they demanded of me caused distress to my sensitive soul, I have not forgotten the unholy satisfaction I derived (while stealing a mouthful of fresh air at the cookhouse door) from watching the other recruits at drill.

Quartermaster's fatigue was better. It often meant a ride on a lorry to a railway station, where whole carcasses of sheep or sides of beef or sacks of potatoes had to be shouldered. Usually the allowance of men was generous. No one was called upon to exert himself overmuch, and there was never any desperate hurry. I didn't fancy myself as a weight-lifter. I was best at engaging corporals in conversation.

Loafers

Bread was handled on quartermaster's fatigue. I recollect passing a very pleasant morning at catching pairs of loaves thrown to me from a lorry, and tossing them in turn to another man whose job it was to stack them in the store. It took a long time. We smoked, at our own appointed rest-intervals, chaffed the corporal, whistled and sang, broke off bits of crust to eat or throw at one another, and forgot all about the Army.

You could sometimes get raw carrots or turnips on quartermaster's fatigue, and very edible they were. Once we had raisins to carry. Rice we had always with us, but we found no use for that.

If you "clicked" for a fatigue in your own time, so to speak, it was another story. There was no fun in working while others rested. You just had to put it down to your unluck, as we used to say.

To be mess- or tent-orderly or hut-orderly was not to be on fatigue. Such duties left no time for leisure, and they couldn't be shirked. Your friends saw to that.

The most desirable fatigues, I always thought, were awarded to men on light duty. I used to envy them. (I never could get more than M. & D.) While we were doing manual ("Bear on them butts, carn't yer?"), there these light-duty men would be, mooning happily about, picking up scraps of paper or weeding the garden in front of the orderly room. It was shameful to see the slack way in which they went about their work.

The particular fatigue I like best to remember was one in which I had the good fortune to take part just before going to France. Half-a-dozen of us, in the charge of a corporal, set off with shovels and haversack rations for a railway siding some five miles distant. There a goods train was to shed for us a truck containing gravel destined for the path leading to the Officers' Quarters. We were to transfer the gravel from the train to a lorry, which would be at the siding to meet us.

It was a fine spring morning. We strode along singing:

I don't want to be a soldier,
I don't want to go to war;
I'd rather stay at home
About the streets to roam,
And live on the earnings of a—lady-typist.

(On second thoughts, perhaps it was too early for that song, but we sang something equally ribald, I have no doubt.)

Music and Song

We were in those high spirits which came to men booked for the next draft. The country lanes along which we marched can seldom have heard such happy laughter. What it was all about I won't pretend to remember.

At the railway siding there was no news of the train or the lorry. We sat down in the sun and waited. Our mouth-organist exhausted his repertoire. We consumed our rations. We argued the old, old questions—whether or not the Army made you pay for the blanket it buried you in: whether "C" company (our own) was really the suicide company: whether the War would be over by Christmas.

When the train at length arrived, we unloaded the gravel in fine style, making a pyramid that gleamed like gold. But still there was no lorry. We sat in the sun again.

Our corporal was an old sweat. He taught us to play brag. I must say, however, that we got the best part of our losses back from him in beer at a neighbouring pub. And good beer it was, too—oh, very good beer! When the

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A VIEW OF ESTRÉES

There are four Estrées prominent on the Western Front: one lies just west of the Sensée Canal, 8 km. due south of Douai; another is 8 km. west of Brancourt, the last "Then and Now" place illustrated, and stands on one of the routes from St. Quentin to Le Cateau; and the third and fourth are both, curiously enough, situated on the Amiens—St. Quentin road, although nearly 16 km. apart. This photograph shows the famous highway passing amid the ruins of Estrées-en-Chaussée, the more easterly of the two villages on it. Dated July, 1917.

lorry arrived, we were all asleep; and then the driver got cross because our aim with the shovels was so erratic. But we prevailed upon him to give us a lift back to camp.

Yes, a soldier's "non-military duties" could be amusing—in England. In France, what difference there was between a fatigue and a working party depended upon topographical considerations. Anywhere near the front line a fatigue was something to be dodged. Twenty miles back it might be enjoyable. Compare, for example, a ration fatigue on the Somme or in the Salient with work for the R.E. well behind the lines.

An Air of Fatality

Who likes to think about such ration fatigues? Who wants to be reminded of the time when he set off, cheerfully resigned, on a journey through the gathering darkness to fetch water?

The party always got lost. It was always pitch dark before the water-cart was run to earth. There was always somebody missing. There was always a corporal who objected to one filling one's own bottle. There was always a battery close by which seemed to split one's head in two when it suddenly opened fire. The return journey was always the worst.

Each man carried two petrol-tins filled with water. Usually he linked the handles together with a belt or his handkerchief, and wore one tin on his chest, the other on his back. Already burdened with rifle, ammunition, and equipment, already tired from the outward journey, the fatigue party felt that it had a reason for finding the additional weight irksome. It was also unbalancing.

On even ground and in daylight, the carrier would have been slow. In the darkness and mud of a devastated area he was snail-like in rate of progress, though not in grace of movement. Headlong he would fall into a shell-hole; knee-deep he would plunge and stick in the mire, or cut wild antics over a straggle of barbed entanglement. Sudden shells would throw the party into confusion, if not into eternity. Verey lights would freeze it into a group of statues. No good luck ever led it by the shortest route. Dawn invariably overtook it.

"Merry Mudlarks," I remember the picture-papers called us.

Wiring parties were popular in my division—popular, that is to say, with the people at H.Q. The wirers would have preferred a different pastime.

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In No Man's Land by Night

Wiring was not strenuous work, and not especially perilous. I remember it as queerly interesting. To be out there in No Man's Land in the darkness gave one a thrill which was really not altogether unpleasant. One whispered. One moved silently. One felt conspiratorial. The pickets clanked, the wire screeched as it unrolled. Verey lights fizzed up, hung in the sky a second, and slowly blossomed, revealing us, we felt sure, as plainly as in broad daylight.

How still we stood! Any minute a machine gun might perforate us. Often enough one did open out, and its bullets sang over our heads. Darkness returned, and we resumed our operations.

We worked hastily, and not too scrupulously. We felt naked out there. We thought of the comfortable depth of our trench almost as though it were home. At stand-to next morning we beheld our handiwork. How weedy, how amateurish, how undisciplined our wire looked compared with Jerry's! Surely we had put in more pickets than that? Surely those round objects were not unwound coils which someone had dumped?

Trench-digging was of various kinds. Its distastefulness depended on circumstances—on the soil, the sector, the weather, the enemy, and the officer in charge. My least pleasant memory is of digging at night, in chalk, under bombardment, during rain, with an officer who had ideas about berms.

On that occasion I thought I had stopped a Blighty one, but it was only the man behind me who had put his pick into my seat. It hurt, but not badly enough to get me down the line, not even enough to earn me a respite from digging, though I took one. Having at some length told my fellow-worker's fortune for him, I sank on to my hands and knees and rested, meditating upon the inestimable boon of existence.

A Merciful Worry

I had forgotten that the chalky slime had made my form visible in the darkness. The officer soon compelled my attention to his berms. "B—less his berms!" I muttered. He learnt better when he had been out a bit longer. It was his first digging party, and he would have been windy if he hadn't had berms to worry about. I conceded him that.

Digging was hard work. It was bad enough in the daylight, when you could smoke and see whether you were being watched or not. In the darkness, especially for the first foot or so, it was often a strain which left you almost stupefied with fatigue.

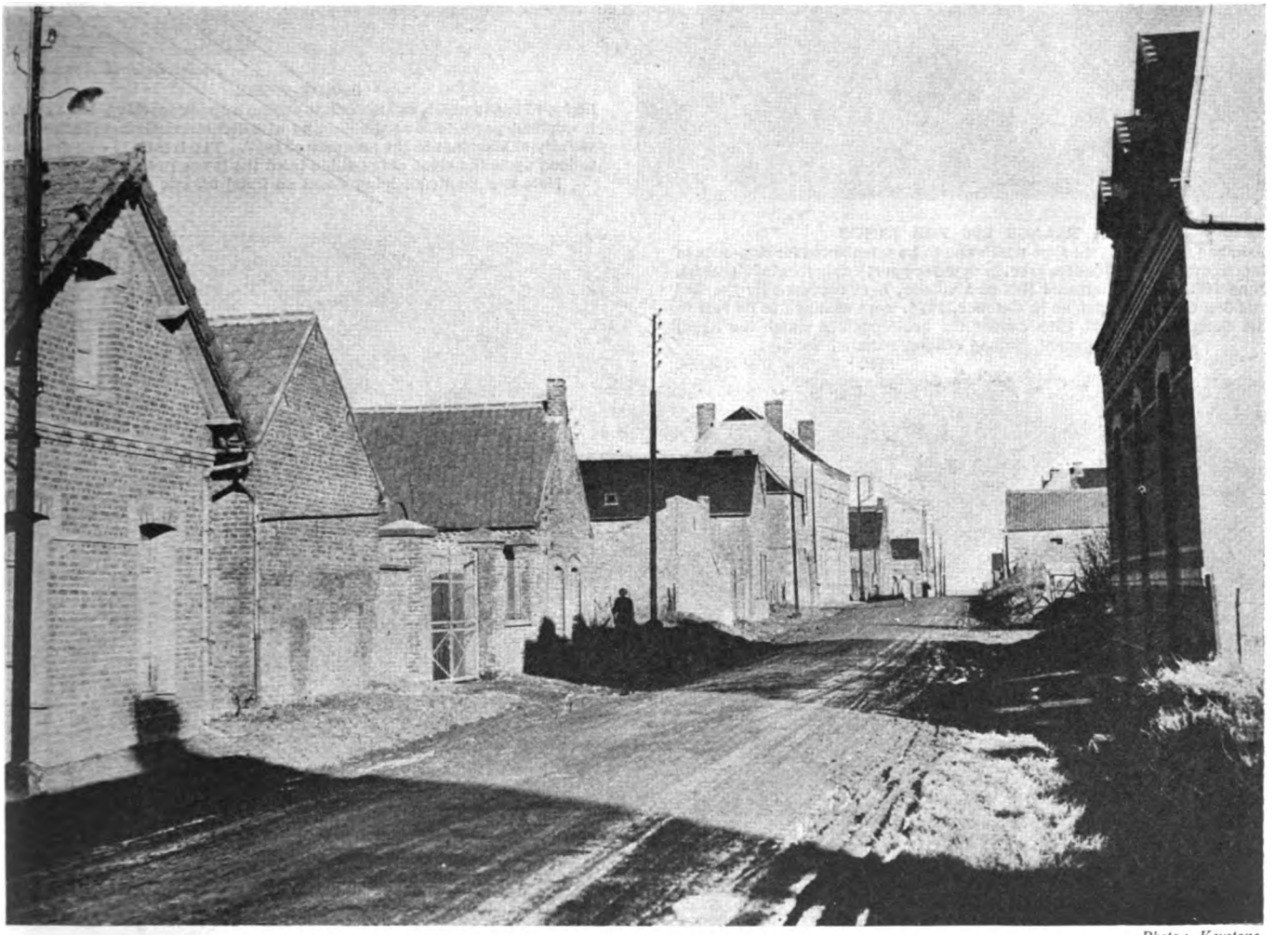

Photo: Keystone.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW IN ESTRÉES

Estrées-en-Chaussée lies 9 km. south-east of Péronne; Estrées-Deniécourt, its namesake on the Amiens—St. Quentin road, is situated 11 km. south-east of Bray-sur-Somme. Nothing much happened at either during the War. In the dark but heroic days of the March Retreat the XIX Corps, under Lieut.-Gen. Watts, at one time withdrew to a line which ran through Hattencourt—Chaulnes—Estrées-Deniécourt—Frise. Watts had six divisions under his command, but scarcely one of them could muster more than 1,000 rifles, and the front to be defended was nearly 14 miles long, with both flanks exposed.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SPADE-WORK

Stripped to the waist, and doubtless calling a spade anything but a spade, a working-party toils at the digging of a communication-trench in the vicinity of Messines in the summer of 1917. The trench is one designed to lead up to the crest of the ridge from the lower ground to west of it. Note the garments lying about as flung off one after another.

A PALACE FIT FOR KINGS

Sandbag shelters, of the type which had to be substituted for dug-outs in much of the soggy Flanders area, in an old support line in front of Kemmel, June 10th, 1917. Kemmel Hill and village, first captured by the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions in October, 1914, were destined to be lost to the Germans in April, 1918, during the great push in which the Royal Sussex Regiment, among others, suffered heavily.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

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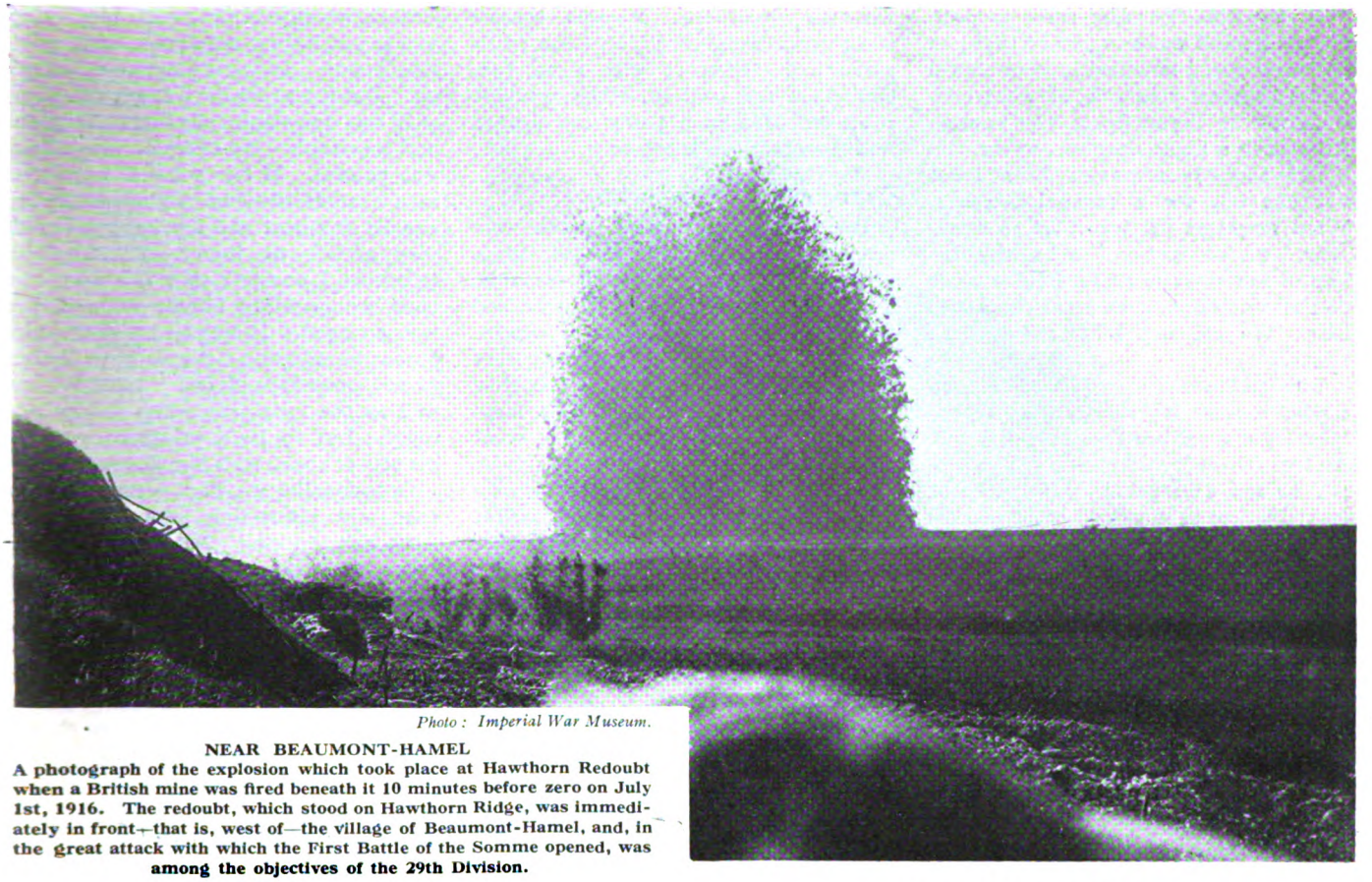

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

NEAR BEAUMONT-HAMEL

A photograph of the explosion which took place at Hawthorn Redoubt when a British mine was fired beneath it 10 minutes before zero on July 1st, 1916. The redoubt, which stood on Hawthorn Ridge, was immediately in front—that is, west of—the village of Beaumont-Hamel, and, in the great attack with which the First Battle of the Somme opened, was among the objectives of the 29th Division.

HAWTHORN RIDGE TO-DAY

The 252nd Tunnelling Company was responsible for preparing the mine under the Hawthorn Redoubt, and the charge fired consisted of 40,000 lb. of ammonal. It had originally been intended to detonate the mine four hours before zero ; and that the explosion took place when it did was rather disastrous than helpful, since it put the enemy on the alert, and was a major cause of our failure to take Beaumont-Hamel.

Photo : S. H. Geller.

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By the time the order came to pack up, your mind was so numbed that you no longer cared how loudly your shovel clanged against your rifle, or what constellation of Verey lights you caused. After such a night sleep was sweet.

I have long been convinced that I was not cut out for a manual labourer. What surprised me was that so many shared my distinction. A healthy dislike of laborious work is, I have come to the conclusion, a national characteristic. We are not inhumanly industrious.

This philosophical meditation is intended to salve my conscience. Whenever I got a chance to "mike," I did. And so did everybody else. When we got to the Hindenburg Line we saw what hard work could do—and what it led to. True, it was said that the Hindenburg Line had been dug by Russian prisoners, but we thought Jerry capable of it. It diminished our respect for him. It was taking the War too seriously.

The daily odd jobs about the trenches—filling sandbags, digging drains, laying duckboards, etc.—were more or less welcome diversions. It was mucky work sometimes, but no worse than gardening. Often it was more fun. Gardeners are solitary, silent, earnest workers. Men in a party can always find something to laugh at.

Carrying the Un-portable

Invitations to carrying parties were not much sought after; for the things one had to carry were not really portable. Pit props, duckboards, coils of barbed wire, dixies of stew, boxes of bombs, trench mortars, etc., seemed to gather weight and a will of their own as they were borne along a serpentine communication-trench. They had a scent for obstacles. No sagging telephone wire, no unexpected projection, no passer-by was ever missed by the object being carried; and the bearer never failed to find the wonky duckboard, the uncovered sump, the new shell-hole.

Once we had to carry up some newly-invented form of barbed-wire concertina. The night was dark and wet, Jerry's artillery was interested in us, the way was long and full of holes. The only possible method of carrying the concertina, which was like a large bird-cage, was to put it over one's head, with one's rifle inside. It wasn't difficult to get on. But it was the devil to get off.

If one fell—and falls were frequent and inevitable—the effect on one's face was painful. If one collided with the man in front—and collisions were equally frequent and inevitable—insult was added to injury. Upon calm reflection I consider that this was the most exasperating fatigue in which I ever engaged. It seemed interminable. It *was* humiliating. As we have learnt to say nowadays, I can "take it" as well as the next man when things are rough; but to be a prisoner carrying his prison about with him got me down.

Occasionally we had comparatively easy and interesting jobs. Once we went tree-climbing. We had to lop off twigs and thin branches, and then thread them into wire netting which had been erected along a road. To my mind the hedge which we thus manufactured was lacking in verisimilitude; but then, I confess, I shared the ordinary soldier's amused scepticism about the effectiveness of camouflage. I just

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

"HARLEY STREET," CAMBRIN

Cambrin is a fairly large village on the south side of the main Béthune—La Bassée road, 5 km. south-west of La Bassée. "Harley Street," here seen with troops going along it toward the La Bassée trenches, was one of those thoroughfares which became household names to the troops in the locality, and were known by repute all the way up and down the Western Front. Cuinchy and Annequin, respectively north-east and south-west in direction, are the villages nearest to Cambrin.

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couldn't believe that Jerry would be deceived into thinking that a hedge had grown overnight, and such a hedge! But no one invited my opinion, and the next day the wind blew the hedge down.

Building One's Own Palace

There were private, exclusive working parties, and self-appointed fatigues. Scrounging round for the materials, and, when these had been acquired, constructing a shelter for oneself and friends, could be a most enjoyable occupation. Digging one's own funk-hole was also an absorbing task—until it caved in. I was not cut out for a miner either.

I remember in the Arras affair sneaking back to Beaurains while shells were still being plonked into it, and bringing back a door, which made a lovely roof for the shelter we were constructing at a blind end of our trench. On the way we had also gathered some Boche groundsheets for which their original owners had no further use. We looked forward to a good time in our luxurious quarters, but we didn't get a chance even to occupy them. We were moved on that night.

The best working parties were those organised by the R.E. There was an engaging lack of formality about them. Infantrymen could not be expected to take R.E.—even R.E. officers—very seriously. The R.E., I must say, however, never showed any jealousy of the infantryman's position. They were sweetly reasonable in acknowledging his superiority, and never missed doing him a good turn if they could.

I once spent a charming holiday with the R.E. at a château situated at a respectful distance behind the lines. The dwellings allotted to my party possessed, if not all the conveniences, at any rate far more than we had lately been accustomed to. The one which I inhabited was a lean-to erected against a steep bank. Into the bank an inner chamber had been dug, and lined with timber. It was provided with a wire-netting door, which kept the rats from doing any more than inspect us.

We crawled into it at night—it was not possible even to sit upright—and slept on sacks stuffed with hay. The outer apartment had sandbagged walls, a corrugated-iron roof, real glass windows, a table, and a bench. Former occupants had bequeathed us a bucket and a coffee-pot; and there was a good water-supply from a spring which had obligingly sprung in a shell-hole outside the front door.

Photo: S. H. Geller.

NO LONGER A MEDICAL STRONGHOLD

A large house known to the soldiers as "No. 1, Harley Street" was used as a dressing-station during the War, and as such its celebrity became comparable with that of Cabaret Rouge and Essex Farm dressing-stations. Miraculously enough, the building, in spite of its size, was not shelled by the enemy. In this photograph, taken by a reader, we see the once famous corner of Harley Street as it is to-day. The street (visible on the left) here debouches into the La Bassée highway.

No Clocking-in Here

But my topic is working parties, not ideal homes.

Our work there was agreeably varied. From the making of duckboards (a hearty, noisy, hammering job) we would be turned on to mixing concrete or laying railway lines. We paraded at 8 a.m., and knocked off at five, with an hour's interval for dinner. I say "paraded," but there was no parade, and no clocking-in. And the dinner-hour could be adjusted to cover time for a bathe in a stream which ran through the château grounds. We cooked our own food, and there was no shortage or lack of variety in the rations.

There was, of course, a catch in it. Our working party was a raiding party

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when it got back to the line. That was not the R.E.'s fault, and I have never had any difficulty in withholding my approval of the poet who wrote, in billets and places where they scratch,

> The cat is fond of milk,
> The bee is fond of honey.
> The infantry do all the work,
> The R.E.'s get the money.

I have other pleasant memories of the work I did when my King and Country needed me. I helped to clean out a village pond. It yielded some of the nicest mud I've ever handled—black and luscious, and of the consistency of mortar.

I remember that the man next to me sang, as he raised a shovelful aloft, "Every valley shall be exalted."

"Who's been feeding you with bird-seed?" he was asked, but he sang on, as he flopped the mud into a barrow—"And every mountain and hill made low."

I enjoyed wheeling the barrow, and I was a favourite that day, because after a journey round the corner with it I was able to bring back a couple of bottles of *bière*. The troops said that gnats had had something to do with the beverage, but they drank it eagerly, if surreptitiously.

"Merry Mudlarks" could have applied on that occasion.

Trench-tramway Riding

Good times were to be had, too, with trench tramways. Shoving the full trucks along the line was hardish work, but the return journey in empty trucks was a perilous joy. You could punt yourself along with a pole at an alarming speed. Coming downhill was hair-raising; coming off the line calamitous. There were "Blighty ones" to be got on trench tramways.

Burial fatigues are best not remembered in detail. I don't care to recall even the digging of a grave for three mules killed by a bomb from an aeroplane. Humane considerations apart, I disliked it because I was on surplus personnel at the time. Having been sent back from Glencorse Wood by one of those strokes of luck which would have made me thank a special Providence if special Providence had been guilty of less invidious distinctions, I resented this interruption of my rest. A mule takes a lot of burying. Three took a whole day, which might have been profitably employed in complete idleness.

Taking them by and large, fatigues and working parties constituted the greater part of the infantry private's share of the War. Taught to regard himself as a fighting man, but soon disabused of the notion that fighting was continuous, feasible, or thrilling, he began to wonder whether his training might not have included rehearsals for the part of navvy and beast of burden, at the expense of the rôle of homicidal maniac in a paroxysm of fury, charging with a bayonet before a dangling sack of straw.

In some future war, perhaps, all fatigues and other irksome and laborious duties will be carried out by robots. Even so, it can hardly be doubted that the infantry will be required to draw picks and shovels from some far-distant dump in order to strain their backs and soil their hands as of yore.

When we abandon ourselves to the luxury of reminiscence, unpleasant things have a trick of shying away from the mind. That is a blessing. Happy memories, however, can, with a little coaxing, be made to come flocking in. If I'm not careful, I shall end by making myself believe that I enjoyed the War.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MUD AND WATER

A short rest during the task of moving water-butts, attached to trolleys, along a light railway near Pozières, October, 1916. This photograph dates from the time when the British were attacking the German positions round Le Transloy. The enemy's last-completed system of defences—a strong one—was that covering this village, and he was known to be digging feverishly in the rear. However, Le Transloy was additionally protected, on the west by a spur of high ground running between it and Lesbœufs, and on the south by the Sailly-Saillisel heights, which were still in German hands.

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CHAPTER LX

THE SUBMARINE MENACE, 1917

The unrestricted submarine campaign initiated by Germany at the beginning of 1917 proved one of the most serious menaces faced by this country in the Great War. This novel form of frightfulness, the ruthless attack upon merchant shipping, soon gave cause for grave concern, and, as the months passed and the situation became acute, for deep anxiety. As events were to prove, however, Germany found that her hasty and arrogant venture was destined quickly to recoil, boomerang-like, upon her own head. The mighty American nation, patient so long, and unwilling to join in a conflict which many argued was in no way her concern, threw down the gauntlet and entered the lists against the Central Powers. In that hour Germany's fate was sealed.

In Germany the Battle of Jutland—fought at the close of May, 1916—had been hailed with wild enthusiasm as a German victory. The German naval commander-in-chief had been greeted as a conqueror, and acclaimed as one of the great sea-captains of history.

Admiral Scheer's Memorandum

Admiral Scheer himself, however, was under no illusions. He realised that another engagement with the Grand Fleet of Britain could not be expected to end so favourably as the Battle of Jutland had done. He drew up for the German Emperor a memorandum in which he stated in emphatic—indeed, in peremptory—language his conviction that to risk another trial of strength between the rival navies was to invite disaster for Germany. In the strongest terms he advocated intensive warfare by submarine craft.

His views were echoed by the trend of popular opinion in Germany. The blockade maintained by the British Navy had already led to a diminution in the supply of many articles which were necessary for the well-being, and it might be said for the very existence, of the German people, who were eager that the British should be forced to submit to the same suffering.

Further, it was believed—and the belief was well founded—that a restriction of food-supplies would be not merely a hardship and inconvenience to the British people, but a vital threat, and that submarine warfare, intensive in character, and ruthlessly employed against merchant vessels, might well bring Britain to her knees.

Accordingly, on January 31st, 1917, the German Emperor, in a message to the Chief of the Naval Staff, issued an order which changed the course of the War by sea and by land: "I command that the unrestricted U-boat campaign shall begin on February 1st, in full force." In this campaign "barred zones" were to be established not only round Great Britain, but adjacent to France and Italy, and also in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Within these zones Germany declared that all navigation was prohibited; and all ships—not only British and Allied vessels, but neutrals also—were liable after February 1st to be sunk without warning by any German submarine.

In issuing this arrogant decree the German Government believed that it might be possible, by the threat of unrestricted sinking, to paralyse entirely the activity of neutral shipping, while at the same time inflicting such losses upon British and Allied vessels as would render it impossible for them, without neutral assistance, to maintain the essential services.

The U.S.A. Severs Relations

Undoubtedly the scheme had possibilities; but it was wrecked by the existence of a neutral power of immense, if latent, military strength, and of great national pride. The United States of America declined even to consider the modifications which the German Government proposed for her benefit. On February 3rd President Wilson announced to Congress that diplomatic relations with Germany had been severed. On the same day the German ambassador was handed his passports.

Thus, before the scheme of unrestricted submarine warfare was two days old, Germany had added another nation—and the most powerful single nation on the globe—to her list of enemies. The fact, however, served but to add to the intensity of her new campaign. American intervention, if it were to be of real effect, must be in Europe; American troops could reach Europe only in ships; the more ships that were destroyed, the less there would remain for the transport of American troops; and of such as were left, transport could be furnished only by vessels surplus to the minimum required for the food-supply which was a matter of life or death for Great Britain.

The intensive submarine campaign opened as arranged on February 1st, when a small tramp steamer was torpedoed without warning, with the loss of 10 lives. Thenceforward the Germans pressed the British Mercantile Marine hard, and the losses began to mount up in an alarming fashion. A big Anchor liner, the *California*, soon fell a victim, 44 of her crew and passengers being drowned. A still bigger liner, the *Laconia*, 18,000 tons, soon followed; and by the end of the first month German submarines had "bagged" 86 British ships totalling a quarter-of-a-million tons.

The action of enemy cruisers, torpedo boats, and mines brought the total up to 105 ships of over 300,000 tons, with a death roll of 402. Neutrals had also suffered heavily, and half-a-million tons of shipping under all flags were sent to the bottom in February alone.

This, however, was but a foretaste. In March the losses, both in the British Mercantile Marine and amongst neutrals, were still larger: 127 British merchantmen were sunk, 62 of them without any warning. Crews and passengers were left to shift for themselves, sometimes hundreds of miles from the nearest land, while in some cases the submarines would shell the boats crowded with helpless people. Not content with such infamy, the Germans on two occasions attacked hospital ships, although these were displaying at the time all the Red Cross emblems, which should have rendered them immune from attack.

Britain's Maritime Black Month

Then followed April, 1917, the most disastrous month for British merchant

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Photo: Stephen Crisp, Southsea.

"EVANS OF THE *BROKE*"

Admiral Sir Edward Evans, K.C.B.—still universally known by the name given him above—had already achieved distinction before the War by his connection with Antarctic exploration. In 1902-4 he was navigating officer in two relief-expeditions to the *Discovery*, and in 1913 took command of Captain Scott's ill-fated South Polar expedition after the death of the gallant leader. During the War his great hour came when, in 1917, his destroyer the *Broke*, in company with the *Swift*, defeated six German destroyers, sinking two of them. For this exploit he was promoted captain and awarded the D.S.O. Admiral Evans was knighted in 1935 and in the same year was appointed Commander-in-Chief, The Nore.

shipping in the whole War. Well over half-a-million tons were sunk by submarines alone; a thousand lives were lost; and the total losses of Allied and neutral shipping approached the stupendous sum of a million tons.

The Germans, in the prosecution of this ruthless and illegal campaign, were disregarding the rules and obligations of maritime warfare as previously observed by so-called civilised nations. Hitherto it had been a point of honour to rescue from drowning those seamen whose ships had been taken or destroyed. It was reserved for the 20th century to witness in the German campaign the deliberate jettisoning of all such obligations formerly considered sacred, and the casting to the winds of the most elementary dictates of humanity.[1]

It must not be thought, however, that the German underwater craft were having everything their own way. Although, during the month of March, well over 100 British merchantmen were sunk or captured, there were nearly as many encounters in which the submarines were foiled in their object. And on two occasions during the same period a fight between a merchant steamer and a submarine resulted in the latter being definitely worsted.

Further, Germany was very soon to feel still more acutely the hostility of her newest enemy, for on April 2nd the President of the United States asked Congress to recognise a state of war; and four days later America entered the World War as a combatant.

Nor—needless to say—was our Navy idle. It was at once recognised that every possible form of offensive should be taken against the submarines and the High Seas Fleet which backed them. An anti-submarine division of the Naval Staff was formed at the Admiralty, and the services of young naval officers who had shown special inventive abilities in connection with anti-submarine warfare were freely utilised.

[1] Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, iii, p. 7.

The urgent necessity at the moment was to destroy enemy submarines at a rate faster than that by which they could be replaced. It was believed that the Germans were adding eight per month to their strength in submarine craft; and destruction at a similar rate would obviously be very difficult. Especially was this so in view of the fact that during the early months of 1917 the only methods of attack were by surface ships, aircraft, and our own submarines.

A Brilliant Suggestion

Proposals of every kind, however, were quickly and carefully considered. Some of them were remarkable in their ingenuity. One, submitted to Sir John Jellicoe by an imaginative civilian, was to fill the whole of the North Sea with Eno's Fruit Salt, the effervescing impetus of which would force all submarines to the surface![1]

The existence of the intensive submarine campaign did not entirely eliminate what we may call "straight" naval warfare. January had seen activity between the destroyer flotillas of both sides, and when February came the surface operations of the Germans were directed towards supporting their submarines. For this purpose a succession of raids was carried out against the Strait of Dover, and on March 17th the enemy sank one British destroyer and damaged another. We shall, however, see shortly that the raiders were not always so fortunate, and will learn how "Evans of the *Broke*" came to be familiar as a household name.

Meanwhile space must be found to record the fact that, over two years after it had been asserted—and truthfully—that the German flag had been swept from the high seas, it was now reappearing in a disconcerting fashion. Toward the end of 1916 three armed raiders, the *Moewe*, *Wolf*, and *Seeadler*, managed to slip out in succession for operations in Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific waters respectively. On March 22nd, 1917, the *Moewe* arrived back safely at Kiel after a cruise in which she had destroyed 122,000 tons of merchant shipping, by far the larger portion of which was British.

As for the *Wolf*, she specialised in mine-laying; and great was the dismay when both off Capetown and Colombo Allied ships were blown up. These disasters were the work of the *Wolf*, which eventually got safely home in February, 1918, after an astonishing cruise of 64,000 miles, which had lasted

[1] Earl Jellicoe, *The Submarine Peril*, p. 36.

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451 days. By direct capture, or through the minefields which she had laid, she had accounted in all for 120,000 tons of shipping, of which three-quarters were British.

The *Seeadler* was wrecked among the Society Islands during the summer of 1917, and had collected but a small bag—a mere 18,000 tons or so.

Psychological Effect

The total of victims of the three raiders was insignificant when set beside the results obtained by the German submarines during a similar period; but the psychological effect was by no means inconsiderable, for it showed that Germany was capable of commerce-destruction in waters thousands of miles away from the war-zones infested by her underwater craft.

The submarine campaign, as a matter of fact, appealed much more to the German Naval Staff than did raiding, and during the first three months of 1917 only one raider was sent to sea. She was a captured British vessel renamed *Leopard*; but her career was a very short one, for some 200 miles N.E. of the Faroes she was intercepted and sunk on March 17th.

And now for Evans and the *Broke*. On the night of April 20th–21st two divisions of German destroyers came down to raid the Strait of Dover. One division attacked Calais; the other aimed at Dover, which was shelled. But the German fire was extremely wild; "a considerable number of shells were fired blindly into the county of Kent." About a quarter-to-one on the morning of the 21st, the raiders were on their way home when they were sighted by the British destroyers *Swift* (Commander Pack) and *Broke* (Commander Evans) only some 600 yards away.

Instantly engagement ensued. Both the British destroyers endeavoured to ram an enemy craft, after firing a torpedo. The *Broke* got home into G 42, crashing into her abreast the after-funnel; and a hand-to-hand fight ensued in which German boarders were driven back. The *Broke* was for a time unable to extricate herself, but eventually got clear; and although her engines were disabled by a shell, she returned to complete the destruction of another German destroyer which was in flames. The *Swift*, meanwhile, was engaged in a valiant but unsuccessful pursuit of the German leader, and the remainder of the night was passed in getting the *Broke* back to harbour and in picking up the German survivors.

A Desperate Position

The news of this spirited encounter caused great satisfaction in this country. Nevertheless, at the end of April it was recognised by the high authorities that the position resulting from our devastating losses was almost desperate. Unless something could be done to check the fearful rate of disappearance of our shipping, there was a grave chance that Great Britain, the prop and support of the whole coalition, would collapse. Everything, indeed, continued to show that the Allies were really within sight of disaster.[1]

The outlook was dark and perplexing to those who saw the Grand Fleet remaining mistress of a sea which was nevertheless becoming a cemetery for British shipping.[2]

The efforts to deal with the situation were bound up chiefly with the adoption of the convoy system; improvements in the technical field, which comprised nets, mines, depth charges,

[1] *Official History of the War, Naval Operations*, iv, p. 385.

[2] Captain A. C. Dewar, R.N., *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12th ed., xxxii, p. 609: *Submarine Campaigns*.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

H.M.S. *BROKE*

The *Broke* herself bears an illustrious name, for she was christened after the British captain (later rear-admiral) who on June 1st, 1813, commanded the *Shannon* in her famous and successful duel with the American frigate *Chesapeake*. H.M.S. *Broke* began her Great War activities somewhat ingloriously by a serious collision with H.M.S. *Bellona* in the North Sea on December 17th, 1914. Later, on May 31st, 1916, she participated in the Battle of Jutland, and on April 21st, 1917, occurred the dramatic episode described in the text just above this photograph. The six enemy vessels then defeated had been intending to raid Dover.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HÉNENCOURT TEEMING

Two "Then and Now" illustrations of this small village due west of Albert were given on pages 788 and 789; and, of the present pair, the war-time view is closely akin to its predecessor. Again the 17th Division appears during its concentration at Hénencourt as V Corps reserve, while, in the above photograph, artillery wends its way along the crowded street. The date of this picture is March 26th, 1918—the very thick of the March Retreat. Indeed, at this time the enemy were but 4 miles away.

and hydrophones; and the activities of the Q ships—all of which will be briefly dealt with in due course in the remainder of this chapter.

The essence of the convoy system lay simply in this: that, instead of proceeding singly, merchantmen should cross the seas in bodies of 20 ships or so, and should be accompanied by a naval escort when once they reached the vicinity of the submarine hunting-ground.

Curiously enough, the proposal encountered at first immense opposition—even from shipowners and shipmasters themselves. The naval authorities disliked the idea of the drain on the limited number of destroyers available for naval operations, while shipowners and ship captains saw that the pace of a convoy must be the pace of the slowest ship, and feared that merchant service officers could never "keep station" with the accuracy required. Moreover, there would inevitably be congestion at the ports of assembly and arrival; while over and above all these objections was the plausible one that a convoy would of course present a much larger target to a submarine than would a single vessel.

Convoy System Instituted

There were, nevertheless, some keen partisans of the project, and by the end of April, 1917, the situation was so disquieting that it was decided to give it a thorough trial. It began to be seen that every ship, whether British or neutral, was of national importance, and that the loss of 373 ships a month meant that "the Navy would lose the war before the Army could win it." The first homeward-bound convoy started on May 24th, and by June, 1917, others were being regularly run. Two months later a service of outward-bound convoys was also in operation.

A convoy usually consisted of from 16 to 30 ships. Normally it steamed in five or six columns under a convoy commodore, until it met its escort at a pre-arranged rendezvous, when the command became vested in the senior officer of the escorting force. Such escort would, in the normal convoy, consist of some eight or more destroyers; and later the homeward-bound convoys were allotted also an ocean escort of armoured cruisers or armed merchantmen which accompanied them the whole voyage.

The great bulk of this work was performed in the Atlantic, the assembly ports coming to be (on the North American continent) Sydney,

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Photo: Keystone.

HÉNENCOURT STREAMING

The desolation of this rain-swept scene is in striking contrast to the sunlit bustle of the older view. At a casual glance there is nothing about modern Hénencourt to distinguish it from a thousand-and-one other battle-area villages; but closer inspection reveals that it has had the all-too-rare good fortune to escape extensive damage by bombardment, for many of its roofs display the picturesque (if not always water-tight) irregularity which comes only of old age. The walls, too, on the right, are obviously pre-War.

Cape Breton Island; New York; Hampton Roads, Virginia; and Halifax, Nova Scotia. For supplies coming from Brazil and the Argentine the merchantmen collected at two West African rendezvous, Dakar and Sierre Leone. Gibraltar was the place of assembly for the Mediterranean trade.

The entry of the United States into the War was of immense assistance, and before the end of the year the American Navy was performing a share of the convoy escort duty for the Atlantic service: 27 per cent. of the destroyers required, and 35 per cent. of the armoured cruisers, being found by the United States.[1]

The success of the convoy system, though interrupted, was steady. By the end of September our maximum rate of loss had been reduced more than 50 per cent., and the last months of the year showed the destruction of 253,000 tons of shipping as against over half-a-million tons the previous April. The number of convoys in December was 74, equally divided between outward and homeward-bound, the average size of a convoy being then 13 to 14 ships.

Submarine Figures

The number of German submarines operating during the month was somewhere between 60 and 65. For every one of these craft actually operating, it was calculated that there were always two others either "resting" or in reserve. During the last three months of 1917 there were some 200 actual encounters with German submarines made by surface ships, submarines, and aircraft, the number of enemy under-water-craft destroyed in these engagements being, it is believed, 23.

The efficacy of the Atlantic convoys was, however, offset by two successes achieved by German attacks against the Scandinavian convoys. On October 17th two fast German cruisers sank the two escorting destroyers, *Strongbow* and *Mary Rose*, as well as 9 out of the 12 merchantmen. Again, on December 12th, a German destroyer attack resulted in the sinking of one of the escort—the destroyer *Partridge*—and in the loss of all the convoy.

The convoy system was, of course, primarily defensive. It could at first do very little toward fulfilling the real aim of the Admiralty—the destruction of German submarines at a rate greater than that at which they could be produced. But early in 1917 the value of depth charges was realised, and their pro-

[1] Jellicoe, *The Submarine Peril*, p. 223.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LAYING A SUBMARINE NET

A scene photographed on board a drifter. The figures of German U-boat losses throughout the War make interesting reading. In 1914 the number was 5; in 1915, 19; in 1916, 25; in 1917 it rose sharply to 66; and in 1918 the losses were as high as 85. This total comes to exactly 200, of which 14 vessels were blown up by their own crews. British submarine losses amounted to 54, including 7 vessels voluntarily destroyed at Helsingfors in 1918 to avoid capture.

duction started on a large scale; and by the end of 1917 the number issued to escorting destroyers had increased ten fold.

The German submarines now began to "feel the draught." The ideal range for a U-boat was between 100 and 1,000 yards; and so, if one wished to attack a convoy with any reasonable chance of success, she had to fire her shot from almost under the bows of the protecting destroyers. A torpedo, however, gives itself away by a clearly-marked track, and the speedy destroyers would race along that line until they reached a spot where they judged the submarine to be. Then, steaming in narrowing circles, they would drop their terrible depth charges.

The attacking U-boat was not always destroyed, but a crew which had once properly experienced an organised depth-charge attack usually picked less efficiently-protected victims next time.[1] Actually a dozen or so submarines were destroyed in this way in 1917 and 1918, out of a total of 132 known definitely to have been sunk.[2]

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LAYING MINES

Another device to cope with the U-boat menace: mines, attached to nets, are cast overboard from a British minelayer. Submarine mines were not a Great War invention, but had been used as early as in the American Civil War of the 1860's. The early type, however, consisted of "controlled" mines. The Great War "uncontrolled" type was first employed in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Mine-laying may be carried out by almost any kind of vessel, including the submarine.

"Hunting Patrols"

The main offensive against these craft was carried out by what were known as hunting patrols—made up of surface vessels fast and slow: destroyers and "P" boats, etc., in one class, and yachts, trawlers, and drifters in the other; by submarine patrols working in certain areas; by aircraft patrols; by mine-fields in the Bight of Heligoland, the North Sea, the Strait of Dover, and off our coasts; and by mine-nets in various places, particularly in the Strait of Dover. In addition there were the Q ships, but their efficacy had begun to wane before the end of 1917.

Our submarine patrols had a particularly exciting time, for not only had they the enemy to consider but could also cry "Save me from my friends." The rule for our surface craft on sighting a submarine was simply "Ram or shoot first. Enquire afterwards." There were, of course, such things as recognition signals, but they had to be given mighty quickly when a submarine broke surface, perhaps only a few hundred yards from a destroyer, the commander of which was simply aching to score a "kill." Sometimes it happened that he did kill, and that his victim was British. But that was all in the game.

The navigation of submarines presented difficulties of its own. "By guess and by God" was a phrase coined during the War by navigating officers of the British service to describe the manner of their navigating. A submarine in war-time, with all artificial

1 W. G. Carr, *By Guess and By God*, pp. 195 196.

2 Jellicoe, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

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aids to navigation removed, with no chance to take a sight for days on end, harassed by the enemy, and with compasses often acting queerly, had to rely a good deal on chance.

Then there was the horrible sea-sickness from which often the hardiest officers and men suffered. The smell of the oil, the close atmosphere of the boat, and the motion while on the surface, were a dreadful combination. In this connection the author of that amazingly vivid book, *By Guess and By God*, may be quoted :

Scarcely Imaginable Horror

" Only those who have themselves actually experienced the horrors of sea-sickness can have any conception of the agony men who served in submarines suffered when they were sick as the result of a combination of bad weather, foul air, improper food, and breathing an atmosphere saturated with the fumes of crude oil and gassing batteries.

" Imagine trying to work out problems in navigation when your stomach was in such revolt that you worked with a pail beside you, and cold clammy sweat, trickling from your forehead and dripping off the end of your chin, smeared the pages of the work book in which you tried to figure. The greatest agony was that one couldn't always be sick. We had to use every ounce of will power to get on our feet and do our work." [1]

Then imagine, reader, after that kind of thing, twiddling the periscope and seeing a vicious—but " friendly "—destroyer coming hell-for-leather at you, belching torrents of black smoke from her funnels, with " a bone in her teeth " as she foams across the few hundred yards that separate you from her.

You submerge in a twinkling, but the destroyer—possibly commanded by a pal of yours—almost gets you, and you can distinctly feel her keel scraping against some of the wires of the submarine's external make-up. Then the destroyer as she passes lays some of her infernal eggs. There is a dull roar. Your submarine is shaken to its very marrow. Up goes her stern, down goes her bow, away she tears in a sickening nose-dive Out go many of the electric lights. Some of the fuses in the switchboard blow out. The depth-gauge registers fantastic figures, and yet she is still plunging down. . . .

Boom ! comes another depth charge, but luckily a bit farther off. It's " by guess and by God " now, with a vengeance. No one knows what the next few seconds may bring, for now the submarine, checked in her mad swerve downward, is trying to force her way to the surface again. At all costs this must be stopped. Calmly the commander gives his orders. Sweating men wrestle madly with emergency hand-controls.

[1] W. G. Carr, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

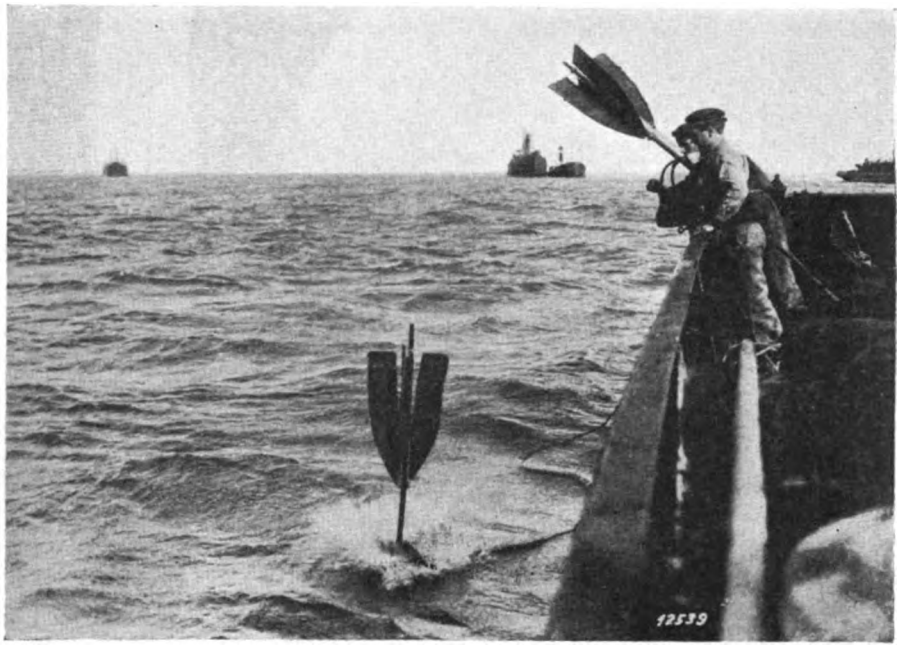

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

MARKING A MINE

Consisting apparently of an exaggerated game of darts, the operation here shown in process is that of dropping buoys to mark the sites of submarine mines. The mine was used during the War in a variety of ways : to render hazardous the navigation of open seas ; to protect estuaries, harbours, and approaches ; to engender the doom of submarines ; and even, as in the Tigris, to hinder the use of rivers. Perhaps the most effective individual use was to bar the Dardanelles.

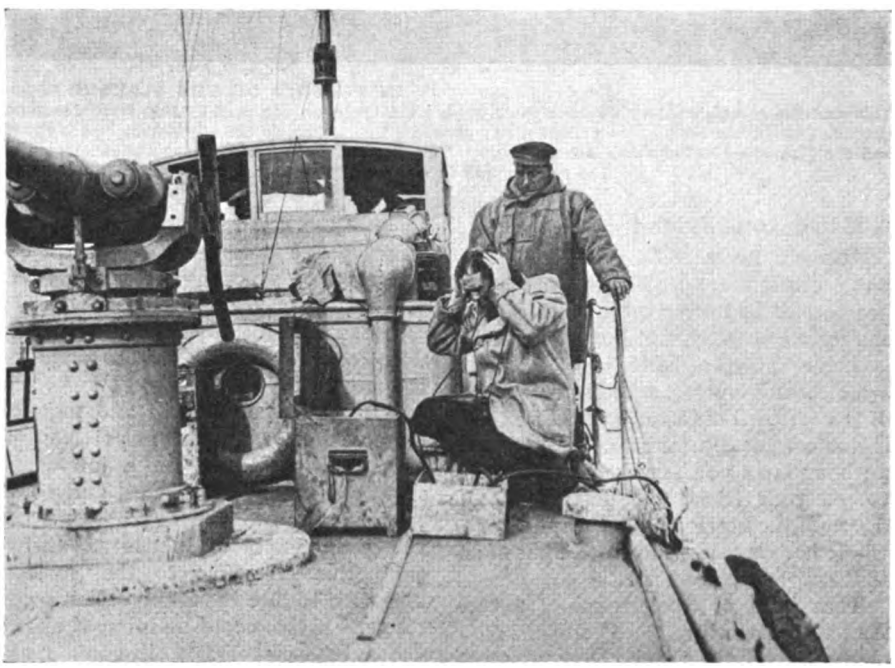

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

USING A HYDROPHONE

The hydrophone is an electrical apparatus for detecting by sound the approach of a vessel through water. It is easy to see that by such a device many aims may be served in war-time ; and, in fact, the purpose of the hydrophone is closely analagous to that of the various " sound-ranging " devices used on land to determine the position of enemy guns. To the submarine, especially, the apparatus was of immense value in the location of the enemy when the vessel herself was submerged and " blind."

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN PURSUIT OF THE FLEEING FOE

This and the complementary modern photograph were taken on the road leading from Joncourt to Bohain, in the area between St. Quentin and Le Cateau. Bohain has already been illustrated; Joncourt lies 11 km. to the south-west, and is situated at the crossing of the Le Catelet—Estrées—Lesdins and the Nauroy—Montbrehain—Bohain roads. The pictures were taken between Joncourt and Montbrehain, and the war-time view shows some of the participants in the Victory Advance going forward in lorries on October 9th, 1918.

A Murderous Friend

"Steady her at 80 feet" comes the terse command. But the submarine has the bit in her teeth now. Up, up, she forces her way, until at 40 feet she is held. Then a little juggling with switches and levers; a little humouring of the terrified craft, and at 60 feet she is got completely under control. Half an hour later you emerge cautiously—to see your friend the destroyer hull down on the horizon on her way to port, where her captain will spread himself as to "how he sank a Fritz."[1]

That kind of thing required nerve. And so did work in the Q ships. A Q ship was simply a merchant vessel—generally a small tramp steamer, but sometimes a sailing vessel—with her "merchant" aspect carefully preserved, but armed as heavily as possible with weapons concealed by flaps and shutters which could be let down in the twinkling of an eye.

She would be officered and manned by personnel from the Royal Navy—all carefully selected for a job which required fortitude, patience, and nerve to an extraordinary degree—and her rôle was simply to induce an enemy submarine to come to the surface, and then to lure it within decisive gun range. If this could be brought about, the submarine, before it could make even a "crash" dive, might be destroyed.

In 1917, as has been related, the German U-boats were sinking merchant craft at sight. But, as torpedoes were extremely expensive things, and as a submarine could carry only a few of them, it was obviously a simpler and more economical proceeding to sink the merchant craft by gun fire. To do so necessitated the emergence of the submarine; and when a German submarine thus came to the surface and opened fire with her guns, the first part of the rôle of the Q ship had been achieved.

Q Ship and Submarine

The next and more difficult task was to get the submarine to a position in which it would be impossible to miss her. There were several ways of inducing her to close. For instance, the crew of the supposed merchant ship might abandon their vessel and take to their boats, leaving concealed on board the gun-crews. The submarine commander

[1] For a detailed account of an incident of this nature see W. G. Carr., *op. cit.*

Readers of TWENTY YEARS AFTER will also recall Commander Stephen King-Hall's light-hearted description in an earlier chapter of a similar experience of his own.

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would naturally wish to secure the ship's papers, and would approach the boats to demand them—the boats having carefully worked themselves into a position entailing the submarine's exposure to the Q ship's fire.

Or the German commander might even wish to board the stricken vessel in order to examine her cargo. Or, again, he might find that, although torpedoed or shelled, his victim was refusing to sink (sometimes a Q ship would be loaded tight with timber to keep her afloat), and in his exasperation approach, on the surface, to shell her at point-blank range. Whatever the circumstances, there was always a chance that the submarine might at last be "caught bending"; and a storm of shells from the Q boat would be the result.

There were some epic encounters connected with this class of warfare, and the names of Campbell, Sanders, Blackwood, McLeod, Auten, and others will be heard wherever officers and men of the Royal Navy foregather and the talk turns to the unrestricted submarine campaign of 1917. To one of Captain Campbell's commands, the *Pargust*—which sank the *U*38—there were awarded two ship's V.C.'s—a very great honour, as this was the first time a ship had been so distinguished.

The actual recipients were to be chosen by secret ballot of all ranks on board. Captain Campbell was nominated by his officers, but as he already wore the cross, he begged that his name might be withdrawn. A ballot was then carried out by an officer outside the ship, and the Victoria Cross was awarded to the first lieutenant, Lieutenant R. N. Stuart, D.S.O., R.N.R. The other cross was conferred upon Seaman W. Williams, R.N.R., from Wales.

The *Pargust* having gone into dockyard hands, Captain Campbell set about finding a new ship, and his choice fell upon a merchant steamer of 2,909 tons register, named the *Dunraven*.

An Illuminating Order

The conditions of fighting in a Q ship will be understood from the standing order: "Should the officer of the watch see a torpedo approaching the ship, he is to increase or decrease speed as necessary in order *to ensure its hitting*." This kind of thing required some nerve, not only for the officer of the watch, but for the engine-room staff, who would realise only too well that any clanging of the engine-room telegraph might indicate that the ship was being offered up to a charging torpedo.

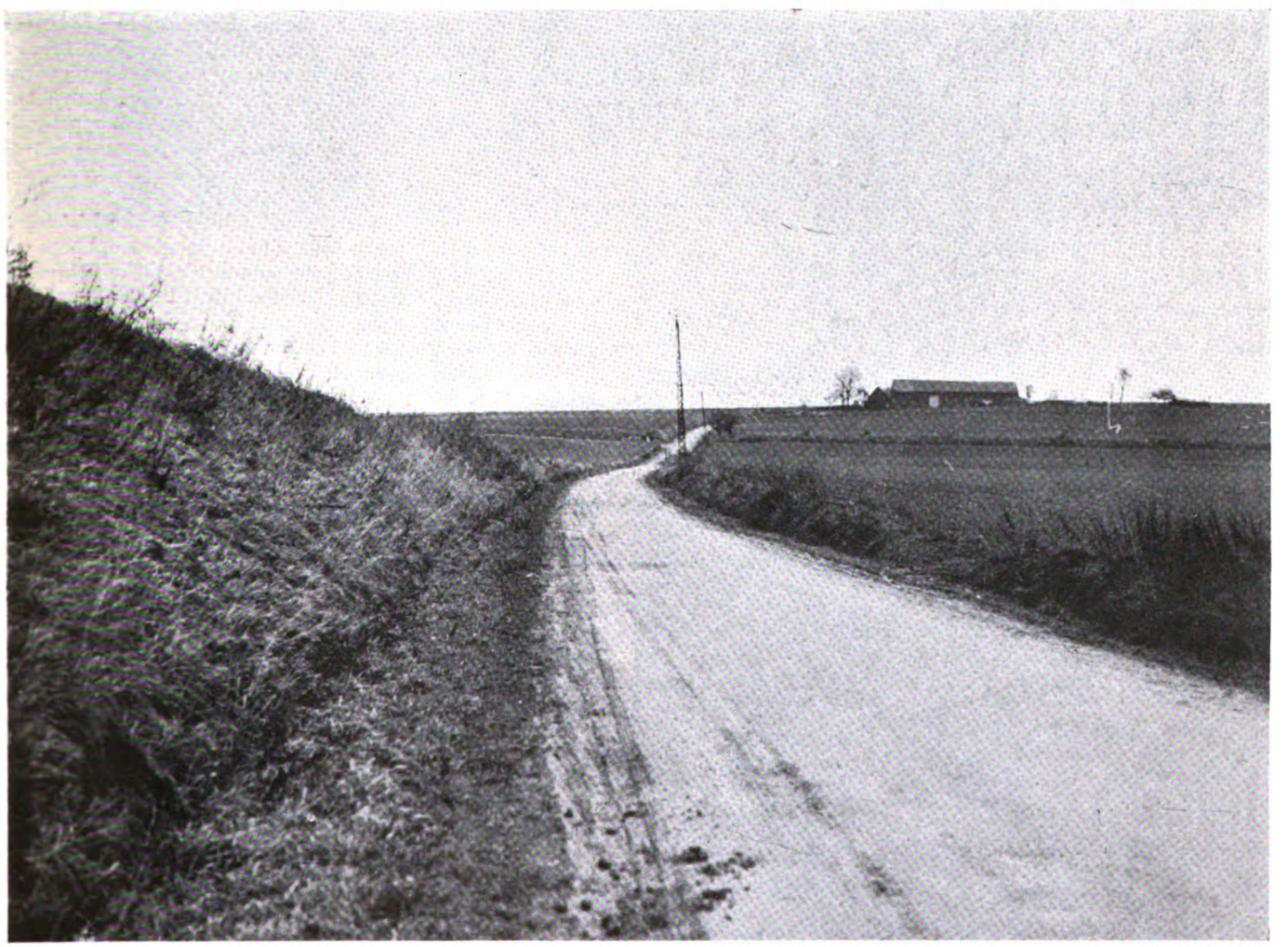

Photo: Keystone

NOTHING LEFT TO PURSUE

Joncourt was captured on October 1st, 1918, by troops of the Australian Corps. Twenty years after, the pilgrim to this little place finds reminders of the past in the shape of two British cemeteries, and additional British headstones in the communal cemetery. Both the special burial-grounds are small, containing respectively 61 and 71 United Kingdom graves. All but six of the casualties in the former are men of the 10th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; those in the larger cemetery are mainly Lancashire Fusiliers and Manchester Regiment.

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On August 4th, the *Dunraven* left Plymouth, looking for trouble. Three days later, in the Bay of Biscay, a three-masted schooner, painted white, was seen. She disappeared suddenly—in a bank of fog, of course. But the old salts swore that she was the famous phantom ship, and that "something always happens to a vessel that sights her."

At any rate, a German submarine was sighted next day. She came to the surface nearly three miles dead astern, and started shelling the *Dunraven*. After half-an-hour of this she came up at full speed, and, turning broadside on, re-opened fire from a range of about 1,000 yards. Things were getting rather exciting now, and it was almost time for the German to "get it in the neck."

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

UP SHE GOES

A small submarine mine of the "controlled" variety—that is, exploded from the shore by an electrical contact—sending a geyser-like column of water into the air at the moment of detonation. This particular mine contained 100 lb. of guncotton.

At 12.40 p.m. the moment arrived for the next move. A shell hit the ship's side abreast of the engine-room. Instantly a gadget was worked from the bridge which let loose a cloud of steam—to give the submarine the impression that the *Dunraven* had been hit in the boilers. The vessel was stopped. "Abandon ship" was ordered. The "panic party" got busy, and the usual carefully-rehearsed pandemonium prevailed.

The submarine now closed rapidly, but unfortunately fired three more shots before ceasing fire. One shell exploded a depth charge on the *Dunraven*, blowing the first lieutenant (Lieutenant G. C. Bonner) clean out of his improvised control-tower by the aft gun. The other two shells set the poop on fire.

Soon the submarine would be a good target, but just at the critical moment, when she was drawing abreast of the *Dunraven*, and lay about 400 yards off, a terrific explosion took place. The stern of the *Dunraven* was blown out, and her 4-inch gun and all its crew were thrown into the air, though luckily falling on some heaps of canvas. The explosion started the "open fire" alarm-gongs.

The Bluff is Called

Down fell the flaps; but only one gun could bear upon the enemy, and it could let off but two rounds before the submarine did a "crash" dive, taking with her the knowledge that the supposed tramp was really a warship in disguise. It was obvious that the Germans would now try to get their own back and make the *Dunraven* pay pretty smartly for having so nearly taken them in. Sure enough, within 20 minutes a torpedo was seen approaching. It hit the *Dunraven* with a tremendous crash just abaft the engine-room.

Yet Captain Campbell and his ship's party still refused to give up hope of bagging the submarine. The *Dunraven* was now confessedly a ship-of-war—and a ship-of-war in flames and almost sinking. Yet it might still be possible to hoodwink the submarine commander and to lure him to destruction.

Accordingly another evacuation of the ship took place, which might give the U-boat commander the impression that she had now been definitely abandoned. In reality, Captain Campbell had arranged to remain on board with enough officers and men to work two guns and the two torpedo tubes—just in case.

But the submarine was taking no chances. For nearly an hour she circled round the *Dunraven*, with her periscope still showing, and evidently taking very careful stock of her victim, whose white ensign, now flying, proclaimed her definitely a ship-of-war. Meanwhile aboard the *Dunraven* the fire on the poop was still raging. Shells were exploding "in penny numbers." Every now and then a box of cordite would blow up with a tremendous report. Taking into consideration what the officers and men had already endured, it is amazing that they could have stood this further ordeal.

Worse, however, was to follow. At

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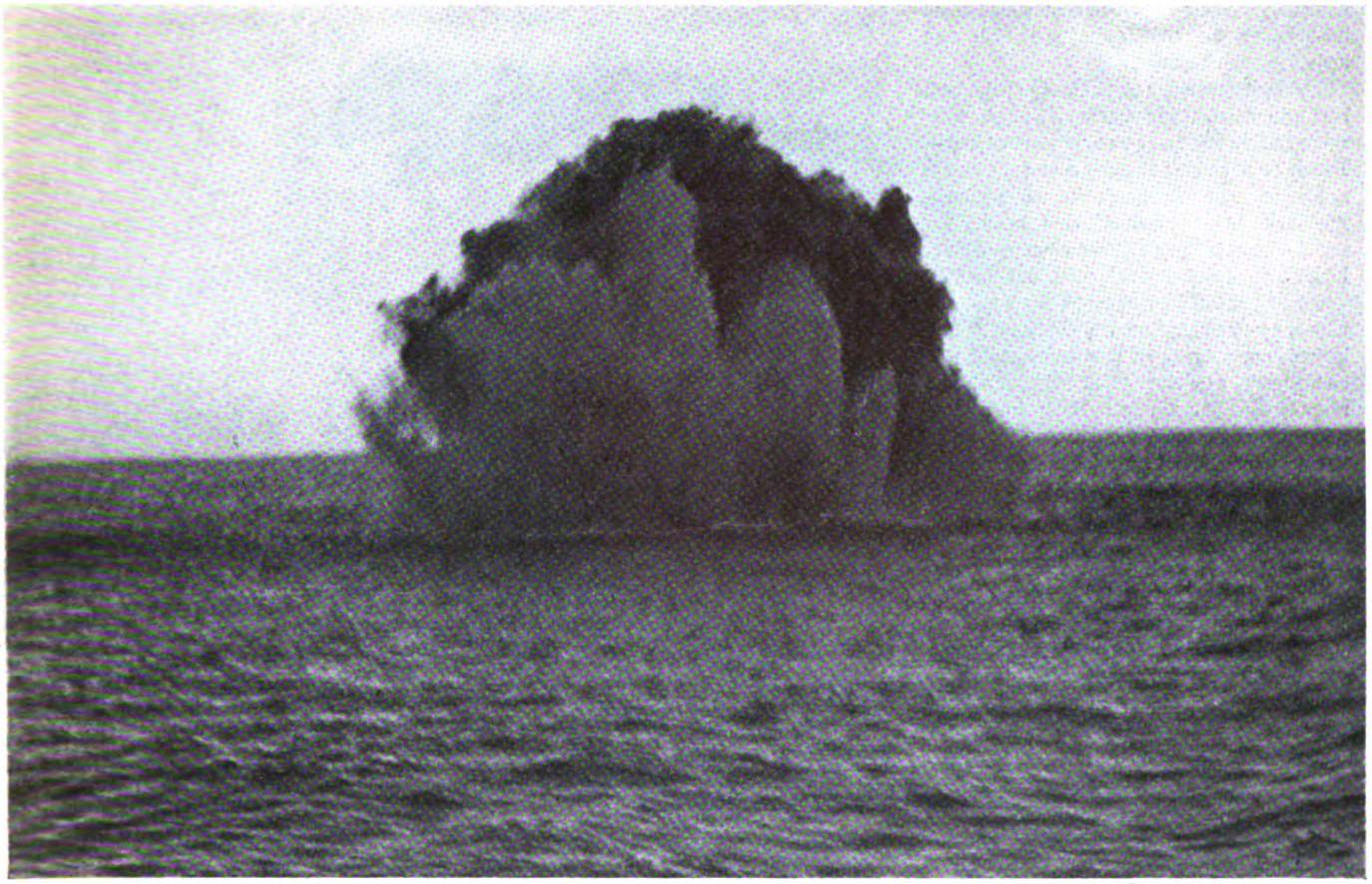

Photo: Stephen Crisp, Southsea.

A DEPTH CHARGE "IN THE ACT"

A fine photograph of a depth charge at the moment of explosion near the suspected whereabouts of a submarine. The depth charge was one of the most effective of the anti-submarine devices used during the War; and out of 182 under-water craft whose cause of destruction is specifically known, 35 were accounted for by this weapon. On sighting her quarry, or locating her by scientific means, a destroyer would steam over or around the position, releasing a line of depth charges. The destruction caused by one of these charges, even if not fatal, would generally be enough to force the submarine to the surface. The depth charge, as its name indicates, was exploded by water pressure, its mechanism being set to come into action at the estimated depth of the enemy submarine.

2.30 p.m. the submarine broke surface dead astern, and promptly opened a heavy fire with its big gun. No surviving gun on board the *Dunraven* could bear upon the enemy, and there was nothing to be done but to grin and bear it. This shelling lasted for some 20 minutes, and was a terrible experience for those who had to endure it.

Death in Four Forms

Shells exploded everywhere; splinters and debris were flying all over the place; death in four forms—by drowning, by being burnt alive, by being blown up, or by being struck by splinters or projectiles—stared all in the face. Yet the men—many of them wounded and in great pain—lay patiently waiting—waiting just for the mere off-chance of "doing in the Fritz."

All the time, through the voice-pipe, Captain Campbell was encouraging his crew. A touch of relief was felt when a message came from the forecastle gun to say that one of the men begged for permission to take off his boots, Captain Campbell through the voice-pipe asked the reason why. The reply came back that, as death was virtually certain, the seaman felt he would die easier with his boots off.

Once more the submarine submerged and approached the ship. At very short range Captain Campbell decided to try one of his torpedoes. To his intense disgust it missed. Another chance came a few minutes later, but though this torpedo actually grazed the submarine, it failed to explode; the vessel felt the impact and dived at once. There was nothing now to do but to send out an urgent wireless appeal for assistance to several ships which had been waiting below the horizon—kept there in obedience to a previous urgent signal not to approach and "spoil the show."

The *Dunraven* was taken in tow, but sank with her colours flying. Lieutenant Bonner was awarded the Victoria Cross. For hours he had been in the thick of the fighting. Twice he had been blown up, and twice had returned to his post. A second V.C. was conferred upon Petty Officer Ernest Pitcher, the gunlayer of the after gun. His Majesty King George V, in making these and other awards to the crew of the *Dunraven*, declared that "greater bravery than was shown by all officers and men on this occasion could hardly be conceived."[1]

Waning Efficiency

Decoy ships could not expect to be a success for ever, for in cases—like that described above—where the submarine got away with the fright of its life, the news of these British mystery vessels became, of course, the subject of investigation in German naval circles. In consequence no U-boat commander put to sea without the resolve to be very careful indeed about breaking surface

[1] *See* Gordon Campbell, *My Mystery Ships*, Chapters XIV and XV.
Harold Auten, "*Q*" *Boat Adventures*, Chapter VII.

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near any " tramp " from which the crew had taken to the boats with all the appearance of panic.

By September, 1917, the Q ships had lost much of their value, though four were still in use in the early part of 1918. From first to last these mystery vessels achieved the destruction of 13 submarines. But against this could be set the loss of 20 of their own number, large and small, some with all hands.

The place of the decoy ship was now taken by the seaplane and P boat. The latter was a craft of low freeboard, not easily seen at dawn or in mist, and was responsible for no less than four submarines in 1917. Aircraft now began to be really effective, and during the year six submarines succumbed to the 230-pound bombs of large flying-boats in the southern portion of the North Sea.

British submarines, too, were constantly on patrol, and were able to count six U-boats to their credit at the end of the year. The hydrophone—an instrument designed to detect submarines by sound-waves under water—also developed greatly, but was more useful as a detector and in controlled minefields than in actual pursuit.[1]

Welcome as was the diminution in losses brought about by the introduction of the convoy system, the destruction of British shipping was still proceeding at a rate considerably in excess of the replacements. In spite of all the efforts made, in spite of new machinery set up to control construction, shipbuilding in the United Kingdom was still quite unable to keep up with the rate of loss.

In May, 1917, Sir Eric Geddes was appointed Controller of the Navy; and one of the three departments of this new branch of the Admiralty was to concern itself very largely—though not exclusively—with merchant shipbuilding. By July 5th the Navy Controller[2] had worked out his programme, the ultimate aim of which was an annual output of merchant tonnage of three million tons, in round numbers.

The Labour Problem

This would involve a rate of production twice as great as that of the record peace year, 1913; and obviously such acceleration could not be immediately achieved. Difficulties were, indeed, at once encountered, first in the supply of the necessary steel, and secondly in labour. Here the dilemma was a very real one. The great wastage of the armies in the field involved a continuous and oppressive demand upon the man-power of the country, and the War Office felt unable to accede to the desire of the Navy Controller that permanent exemption should be given to all men who, prior to March 20th, had been employed in shipyards and marine engineering works.

The real pivot of the problem, however, was the question of skilled labour.

1 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, A. C. Dewar: *Submarine Campaigns*.

2 Shortly after this date Sir Eric Geddes became First Lord of the Admiralty and Sir Alan Anderson became Navy Controller.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A CANINE AUXILIARY

Dogs were employed in considerable numbers by both sides, and by most of the combatant nations. Their duties were manifold, ranging from messenger and Red Cross work to the assistance of spies and the laying of telephone-lines. For the latter operation a drum bearing the cable would be attached to the animal's back, and would unwind as he ran. This photograph—the first pictorial tribute to be paid in *Twenty Years After* to these valuable canine helpers—shows a German messenger-dog near Sedan, May, 1917. The message-container attached to the collar is clearly visible.

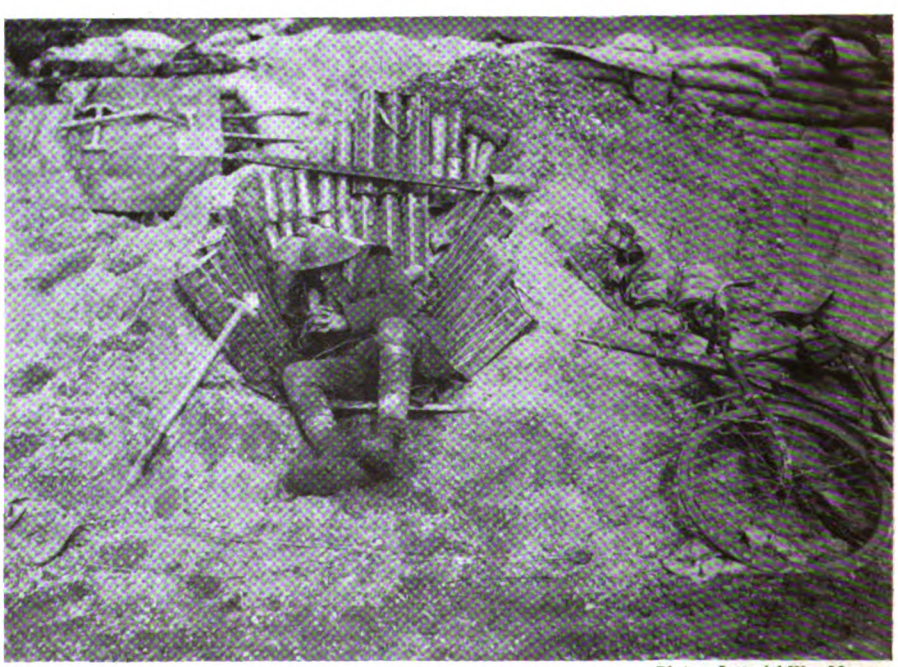

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Not sitting on a volcano, but reclining in a cradle of German ammunition: a British Tommy sleeping the sleep of the just—or, at any rate, of the just dead-tired. The photograph was taken in April, 1917, alongside the Arras—Cambrai road. A determined British attack was made astride this highway on May 11th following, when Cavalry Farm and Rœux Cemetery were taken.

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BEYOND PÉRONNE

Then and Now

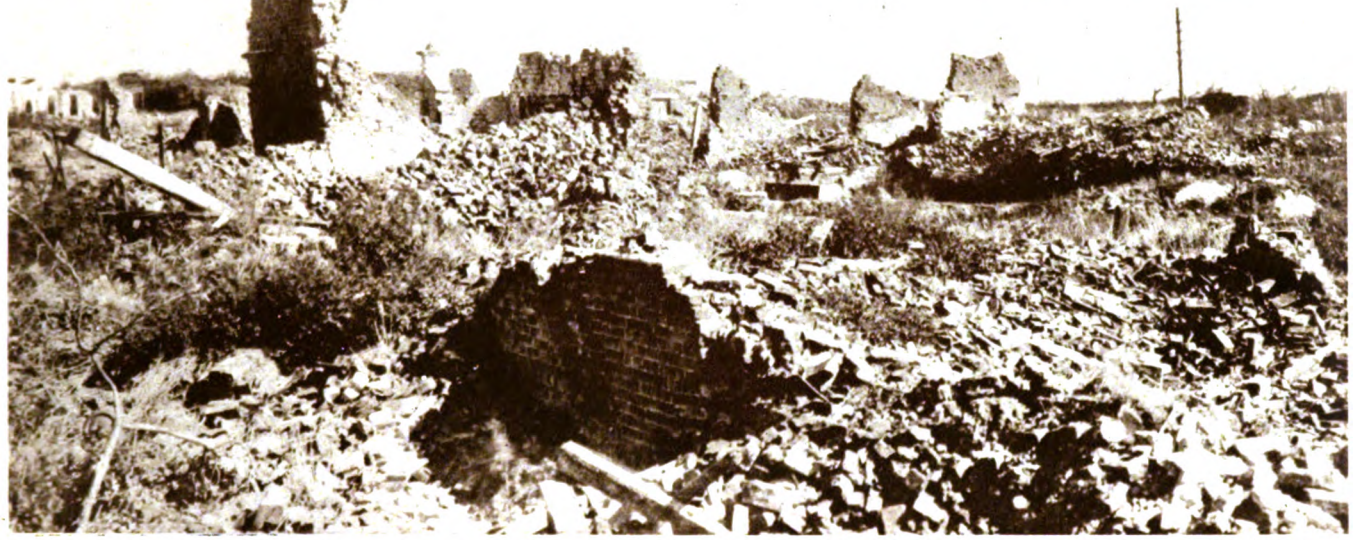

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE SPLENDOUR WHICH WAS LE VERGUIER

The position of this village is 16 km. due east of Péronne, and much the same distance north-west of St. Quentin. Here in 1915-1916 the Germans had one of their two aerodromes in this district. At intervals our R.F.C. used to bomb it, and sometimes "long" reconnaissance flights, as they were officially termed, would provoke one or more enemy machines to rise and give battle. Such engagements, however, were rarely serious or long-sustained. This photograph shows Fort Bull, Le Verguier, in which in September, 1918, four Australians secured more than fifty German prisoners.

Photo: Keystone

DRIVING THROUGH LE VERGUIER

In the second Battle of the Somme, 1918, the 24th Division put up a heroic stand against the advancing enemy at Le Verguier, prior to the fall of the village on the morning of March 22nd. After the turn of the tide, we came back to this area on September 17th, 1918, and stormed the outer defences of Le Verguier the following day. This action was noteworthy for the highly successful use, by the British, of dummy tanks. During the previous year the village had been among those captured by us on April 9th, 1917.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

JUMBLED JEANCOURT

Jeancourt lies due west of Le Verguier, being indeed, the latter's next-door neighbour. Neither village is on a main road, the thoroughfare common to them both consisting of a secondary route connecting Roisel with Bellenglise. The Hindenburg Line ran between Jeancourt and Le Verguier, and while the former was in German hands it constituted an important hospital centre. This photograph shows the ruins of the church, September 20th, 1918.

CYCLISTS

A photograph taken on April 25th, 1918, were repairing their machines in the ruined south of Jeancourt and Le Verguier, and s which it is directly connected by road. Vermand, Flu

Photo: Keystone

THREE SCHOOLBOYS AND A CHURCH

Jeancourt, here shown in its rebuilt form, was first entered by our troops on April 2nd, 1917. After the customary reversal of fortunes the following spring, it was re-entered during the third week of September, 1918; and on September 20th fifteen British divisions defeated twenty German in this sector, capturing nearly 12,000 prisoners and 100 guns. Jeancourt Communal Cemetery Extension was used alternately by either side, and contains 657 dead.

ÉTREILLERS: AN AP

The modern village of Étreillers is as undistin almost universal British cemetery. Neverthel more than qualifies it for a place in our pag however tiny, which to one ex-soldier or anot names o

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DER FIRE

cyclist orderlies, oblivious to falling shells, ge of Étreillers. This place lies 11 km. due 8 km. west-south-west of St; Quentin, with ur minor roads lead from it to Villevêque, res, and Vaux.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

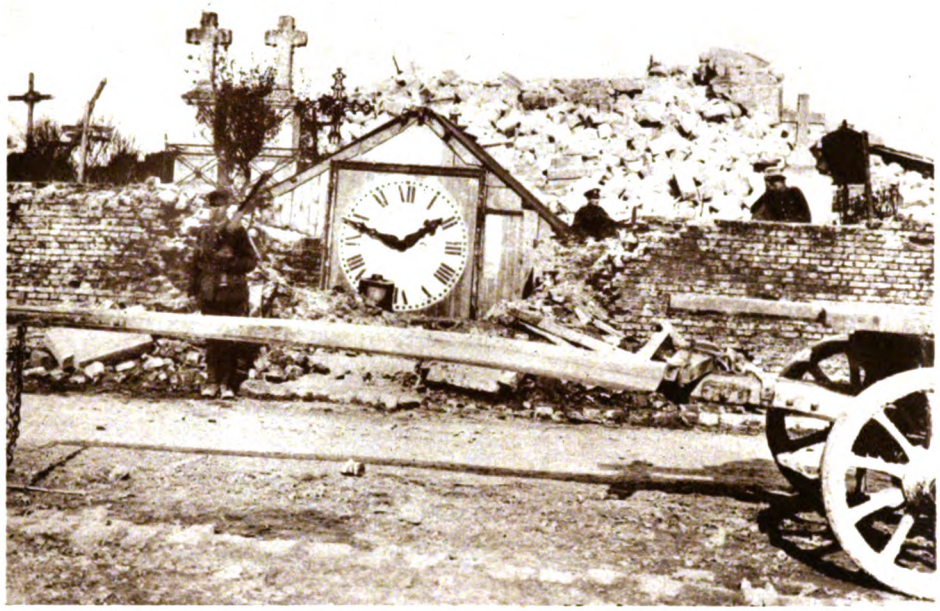

Photo: Imperial War Museum

TIME MARCHES ON

The venerable clock-face of Étreillers church serves a new purpose as the façade of a British dug-out built amid the sacred ruins, April, 1917. Étreillers was one of the almost innumerable villages forsaken by the enemy on his withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and both this and the preceding War photograph were taken shortly after the British had assumed possession. Despite our troops' occupation, there is to-day no British cemetery here.

OACH THEREUNTO

ished as most of its kind, and lacks even the , the fact that it was ever in our lines at all since there are few Western Front villages, do not mean more than all the great battle- ie War.

Photo: Keystone

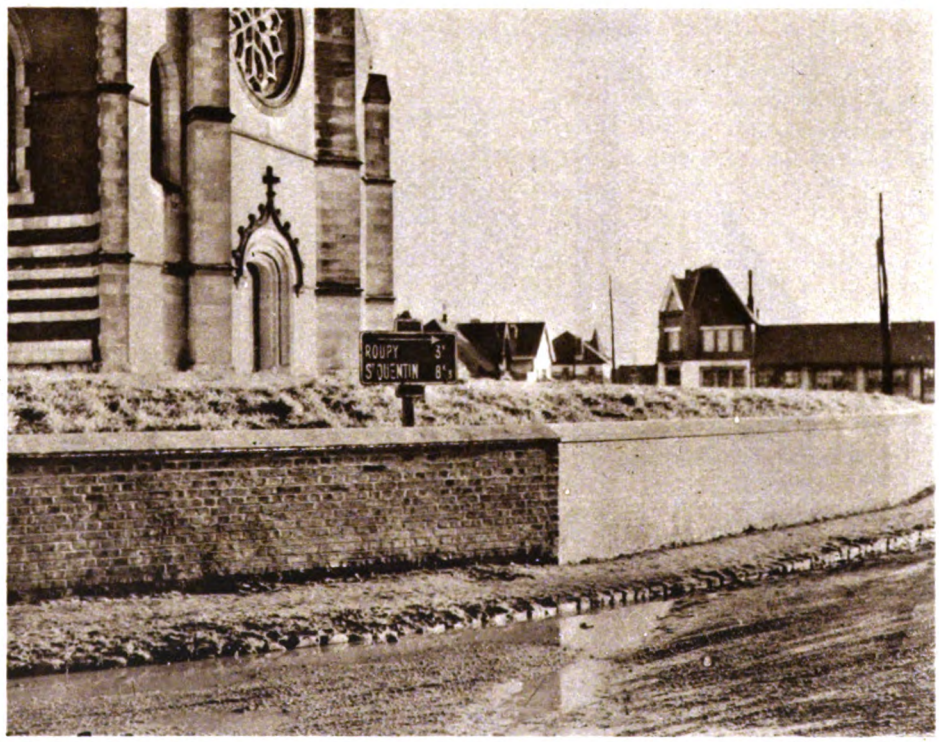

Photo: Keystone

WHERE TIME STANDS STILL

The signpost in this modern picture of Étreillers points the way to Roupy, 3 km. distant. It was near Roupy and Savy that on March 21st, 1918—that day of evil fame—the Germans used tanks in a determined attempt to break through the positions of Major-General Williams's 30th Division. That they failed, and were repulsed with heavy loss, was due largely to the German infantrymen's habit of bunching together, thus offering certain targets.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

RUINED BUT BUSY

After Étreillers had been recaptured by the Germans in the spring of 1918, the changes effected in the Allied Line brought it opposite the French front, and it was the French who were faced with the task of its recovery during the final offensive of the War. The enemy made strenuous attempts to stem the advance opposite, and for many miles south of, Étreillers on September 8th; but for two days the French continued steadily.

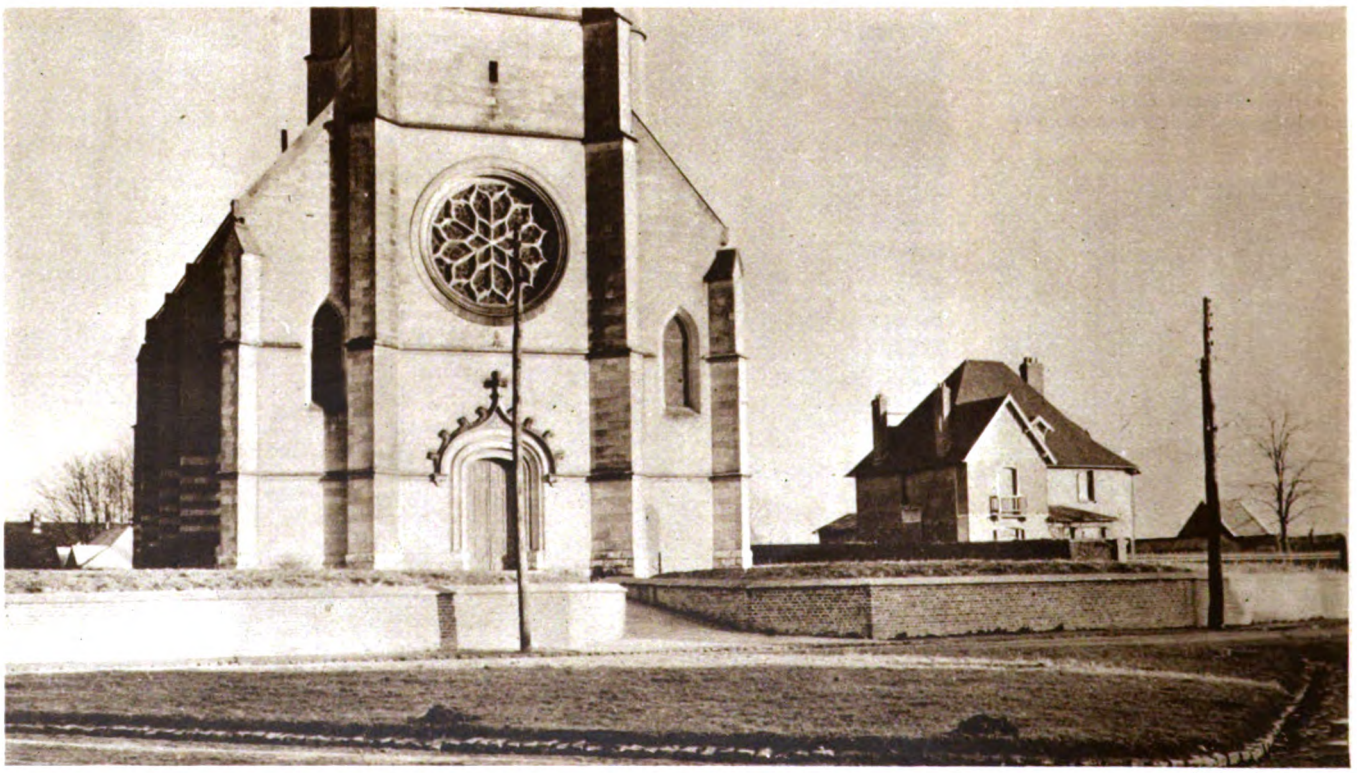

Photo: Keystone

REBUILT BUT EMPTY

The French force operating north of the Somme consisted of the First Army, situated on the left of the Third. During the advance above alluded to, the Third Army, after taking the Fort du Liez, reached the Line Travecy-Hinacourt, and pushed advance-parties on as far as Essigny-le-Grand and Contescourt. These advance-parties were able to link up with the First Army, which had just taken Roupy and Étreillers. By September 11th the Allies had reached approximately the line held by them on March 20th, 1918.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

COVERING THE WITHDRAWAL

A picture taken by a German photographer, showing a rear-guard machine-gun post covering the advancing Allied troops as the Germans withdrew in March, 1917, to the Hindenburg Line. The enemy's famous machine-gunners proved of great assistance in promoting the success of this well-planned and well-conducted retirement. The sector of the line here shown lies between St. Quentin and Laon, and is well within the French area of the front. Laon is a town 40 km. south-east of St. Quentin, and it was from near there that Paris was shelled in March, 1918.

Very many skilled workers from the shipbuilding trades had joined up voluntarily in the early stages of the War. The Navy Controller wished to secure their release, and this presented great difficulty to the military authorities.

Another feature of the problem was that, even assuming that a substantial number of skilled workers could be withdrawn from the front, there must still be a considerable dilution with unskilled, and female, labour, and the introduction of a system of payment by results. These proposals were distasteful to the trades unions concerned, which now declared definitely that they would maintain their opposition until all skilled workers in the forces were returned to their former employment.

It is impossible here, within the scope of this chapter, to do more than refer to the gravity of the situation and the difficulties encountered in the attempts to solve it. Volumes could be, and have been, written on the subject.[1] All that it is necessary to record is that, although the losses by submarine attack had been very sensibly reduced—the drop from the black month of April to November was, for British ships, from nearly half-a-million tons to 173,000—and although shipbuilding had been speeded up, the balance was still on the wrong side.

On the other hand, the Germans were to some extent hoist with their own petard. Unrestricted submarine warfare having brought in the United States on the side of the Allies, German vessels which had been interned in American waters could now be brought into Allied service.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CHOCLITS! CIGARETTES!

Mademoiselle does her best to revive the fallen commerce of Vermelles by offering slabs of chocolate for sale to British soldiers amid the ruins of her native village. In common with those of most nations, the peasants of France and Belgium displayed a stubborn reluctance to leave their familiar haunts, even when shelling had reduced these to complete ruin. This picture is dated June 27th, 1917.

Increase of Inshore Attacks

The relatively satisfactory diminution of losses recorded for November was offset by a distinct rise in the last month of the year. For this increase heavy losses in the Mediterranean and the Channel were mainly responsible. The Germans were replying to the introduction of the convoy system by concentrating more and more upon inshore action, and during the three months between November, 1917, and January, 1918 (inclusive), less than 2 per cent. of their successful attacks were delivered in what may be called open waters; while of the losses incurred by us, over 62 per cent. were within 10 miles of the shore. So persistent was this inshore activity of the submarines that it became necessary to abandon altogether the express outward convoy from Queenstown, and to combine it with the slower convoy from Milford Haven.

In striking contrast to the heavy net losses suffered by the European Allies, the mercantile fleets of the United States and Japan were larger than at the out-

[1] The standard work on the subject is *Official History of the War: Seaborne Trade*, by C. Ernest Fayle. Vol. III, Chapter XIII, has here been drawn upon.

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break of war. Their shipping, however, took little part in the supply of either the United Kingdom, France, or Italy.

To Japan the withdrawal of British ships from the Pacific and Far Eastern waters had presented an opportunity which absorbed all her energies; and American shipowners were no less busy in filling the gap left by the disappearance of the German flag from the seas, and the concentration of British tonnage on War services. The steam tonnage under the United States flag had increased by over 70 per cent. Yet the entrances and clearances of American shipping at British ports were lower than before the War.[1]

So far as the Allies were concerned, the salient feature at the end of 1917 was that ultimate success stood apparently further off than at the opening of this much-trumpeted "year of victory." Russia had passed from collapse to defection, and the envoys who spoke in her name were actually engaged in peace negotiations with Germany. There had been mutinies in the French Army. The Italian Army was defeated. In Macedonia there was virtually a stalemate. Rumania lay cut off from the Allies.

[1] *Official History: Seaborne Trade*, iii, p. 288.

Uncertainty and Gloom

Narrowing down the survey to include Britain alone, the outlook was hardly more reassuring. The financial position was extremely grave—graver than it had ever been during the War. The submarine peril had been checked, but by no means killed; and it had for a time reached such intensity as to justify serious alarm. Ration-cards had made their appearance, and if there was as yet no serious shortage of food, there was always the threat of it. At any rate there were food queues. The indecisive Battle of Jutland had left the Government in such a state of uncertainty that, even 18 months later, 300,000 men were locked up in these islands to guard against "a possible invasion."

The Germans were known to be transferring troops from Russia to the Western Front; it was as certain as anything could be that they were contemplating a vast offensive in France, in which the initiative and the choice of the point of collision would be theirs. German air-raids, too, were beginning to cause no little anxiety. In the harvest-moon week of September, London had been bombed on five nights; while on one occasion the city had been attacked in broad daylight, with heavy casualties as the result.

There were, however, patches of blue in this sky otherwise so heavily surcharged with clouds. The British victories in Mesopotamia and Palestine were wearing down one at least of the Central Powers. American troops were beginning to arrive, and even the German Supreme Command had been forced to envisage the possibility of the advent, before the summer of 1918, of nearly half a million soldiers from the United States. And there was, above all, the fact that the British Navy, with its courage and its skill, had got the German submarine menace "by the throat," and in time would surely strangle it.

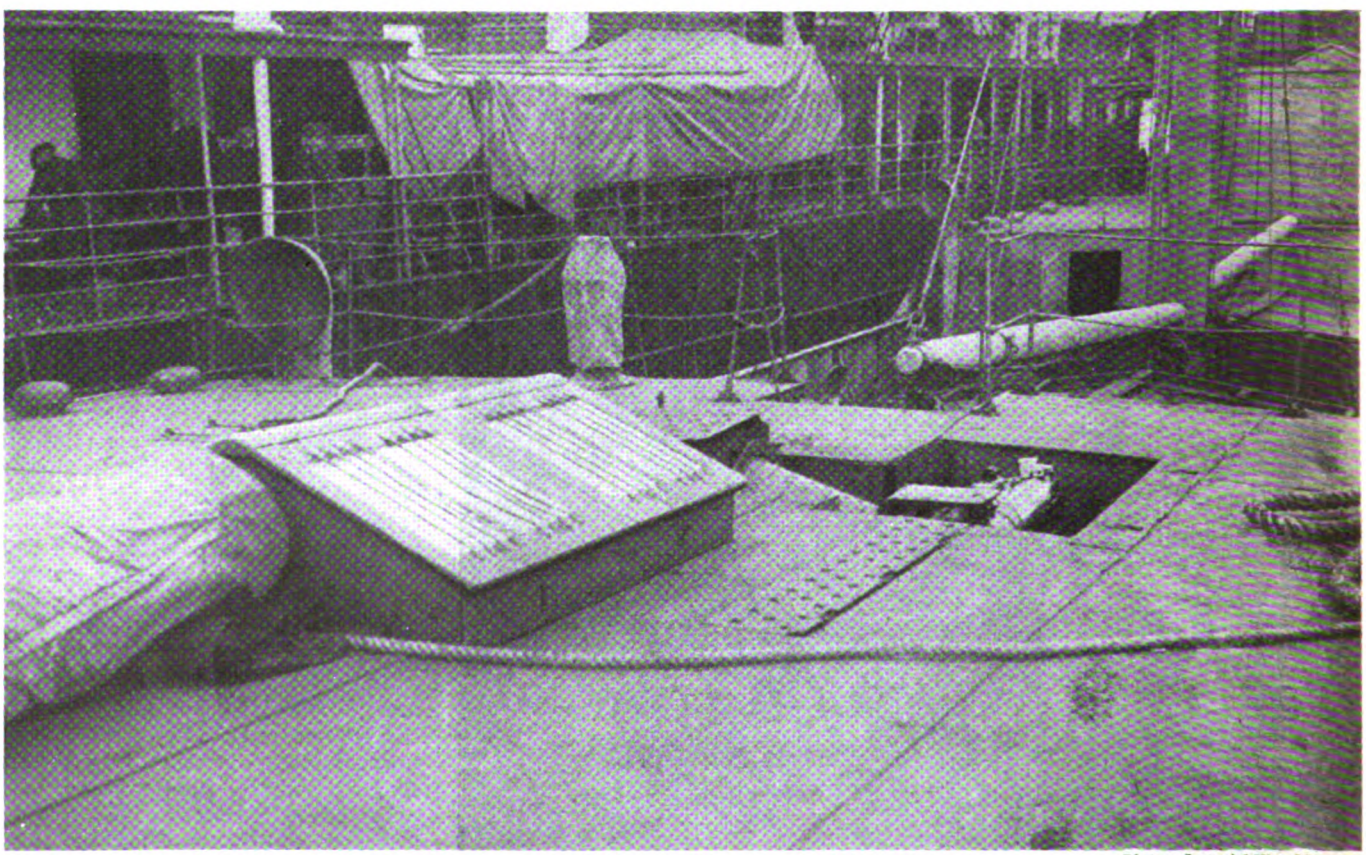

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE DECK OF A Q SHIP

A view of the British Q ship *Hyderabad*, showing a quick-firing gun on its disappearing platform. The first decoy-ship was commissioned in November, 1914, and was in action on June 5th, 1915; but it was not until 1917 that the class came really into its own, and then, during the necessarily brief space before the U-boat commanders "got wise" and the usefulness of the duplicity began to diminish, the Q ships had a brilliant heyday. Many were the stirring episodes connected with this "bowler hat" branch of naval activity, but almost undoubtedly there was none so thrilling as that of the *Dunraven*, a full account of which is given in this chapter.

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CHAPTER LXI

WITH MAUDE TO BAGHDAD AND BEYOND

The fighting in Mesopotamia, as up to this point we have viewed it, has been a tale of woe and disaster. As an expedition the forces in Mesopotamia were in the beginning but poorly equipped for a campaign that was to prove to be more than arduous. The quality of the troops engaged was second to none. Communication and auxiliary services, in particular the medical service, fell far below the standards demanded by the conditions that obtain in modern warfare. In consequence, the sufferings of officers and other ranks alike were great. We now come to a point in the operations at which the initiative passes from the hands of the Turks. After the passage of many weary months of disappointment, sickness, defeat, and casualties, our forces, well organised and brilliantly directed by General Maude, begin the advance towards Baghdad and the north.

WE have seen how General Maude methodically laid his plans for victory and then, his preparations complete, proceeded to deal the Turkish army around Kut-al-Amara a series of hammer blows, finally crossing the Tigris in their rear and pursuing the beaten remnants of his opponents 55 miles up the Tigris to Aziziya.

50 Miles from Baghdad

Here a pause became essential to enable Supply and Transport to build up a reserve of food and ammunition and complete their preparations to supply the army on its next bound. We were now less than 50 miles from Baghdad, with every prospect of capturing the city before the remnants of the Turkish army in front of us could be reinforced. But that would not be the end of our labours: the prize, once in our hands, must be secured against any possible counterstroke that a reinforced enemy could bring against it.

The cavalry reached Aziziya on February 27th, 1917, and in the next few days the long columns of infantry were gradually closing up on the advance guard. The mounted troops broke camp again at dawn on March 5th, taking the road that runs north along the river bank. The armoured cars and the naval flotilla scouted ahead; the infantry of the III Corps followed in rear; behind them the I Corps.

The cavalry arrived at Zor at about 9 a.m. and halted for an hour to water and feed. Soon after they had moved off again, reports came in from a 'plane and from the armoured cars that an enemy force was digging itself in across the road near Lajj. There was a strong wind blowing, which raised clouds of dust, making observation difficult.

Charge of the 13th Hussars

Scouts now brought back news of a convoy of enemy waggons labouring through the dust not more than two miles ahead. The chance seemed too good to lose, and the 13th Hussars set off in hot pursuit.

As they came within sight of their quarry, the squadrons extended and drew swords. A low shrapnel-burst in their faces showed that they might meet with more resistance than had been anticipated. But their blood was up and they were already moving at a gallop.

They were now riding through a desultory rifle fire, and men and horses were dropping. Suddenly, they saw Turks looming up through the dust in a nullah not a hundred yards ahead. They increased their pace and went in with the sword, killing 20 or 30 and rounding up as many more.

The squadrons now came under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from a trench about 800 yards to their front. Men and horses began to fall rapidly. Colonel Richardson gave the order to wheel to the right in the hope of finding a way out towards the convoy, but the trench extended too far, and he finally decided to retire a few hundred yards and advance again on foot.

It was no small test of discipline to carry out this movement under a heavy fire, many horses with two men up, and with wounded and riderless animals plunging and kicking in the ranks. A few Hussars who did not hear the order carried straight on and over the Turkish trench, but none survived. One horse was found next morning, shot dead in the act of jumping, the body wedged tightly between parapet and parados and seemingly still suspended in mid-air.

For the rest of the day the regiment held on to the nullah where they had ridden over their enemy in the morning. As the rest of the Cavalry Division came up, they extended the line in the hope of outflanking the Turks.

The exploit of the 13th Hussars had cost them dear, but their conduct at Lajj was no whit less gallant than that of their ancestors at Balaclava, and probably a good deal more effective. That night (under cover of darkness) the Turks evacuated a position that they had held in force and meant to defend. The threat to their flank had shaken them and brought materially nearer the day of our entry into Baghdad.

Ctesiphon Again

Early next morning we were within sight of Ctesiphon. The Turks had expended much labour on improving the position which they had held against Townshend in November, 1915, but, when the time came, with Maude's cavalry patrols close on their heels, they did not stand.

To the handful of officers and men with the force who had fought here fifteen months before, the sight of Ctesiphon Arch brought back poignant memories. Now, as then, the proximity of the fabled City of Haroun al-Raschid acted like a tonic on the spirits of all ranks. Men were so eager to press on that they would not eat or sleep. The regimental officers found difficulty in checking their eagerness.

The strength of an impression depends very much on contrast. To anyone fresh from the green fields and trees of England, the country on the southern outskirts of Baghdad would appear dull, barren, and uninteresting. After a year in the blood-soaked desert round Kut-al-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSSING THE DIALA

The River Diala, or Diyala, enters on the left or eastern bank of the Tigris about 8 miles below Baghdad. It figured fairly prominently in the fighting of 1917. Our cavalry got within 6 miles of it on March 3rd, and on March 9th General Maude was able to force a passage. On April 2nd the British were in touch with General Baratoff's Russians south-west of Khanikin (above Baghdad), and by May 13th various Russian detachments were across the river in the neighbourhood of Kifri. Finally, 1,600 Turks surrendered to our Allies near the upper reaches of the Diala on November 22nd. This photograph shows British transport negotiating a ford.

Amara, there was much in it to charm the eye and quicken the imagination.

The eternal plain had given way to undulating country. The monotony was broken by mounds, the remains of ruined cities, and the skeleton banks of the historic canals that had once watered the fields of Mesopotamia in the days when it was the granary of the ancient world. Belts of trees by the river supplied a touch of green to relieve the prevailing yellow of the landscape.

To those who carried a copy of Gibbon —and there were more of them than some might think—this country was peopled by fascinating historical ghosts. " Eye-Witness " relates how he was constantly turning to the narrative of the Emperor Julian's campaign to find parallels to our own. In the ensuing hot weather a Gunner Major gave a series of lectures on the ancient history of the country, to which his men literally flocked.

Apart from the fact that the ranks of our armies in this third year of the War contained a great number of well-educated men, there could be no greater error than to suppose that the British soldier does not take a lively and intelligent interest in what he sees, or that he is in any way impervious to the influence and appeal of his surroundings.

Turks' Stand on the Diyala

On the morning of March 7th, the advance guard of the III Corps arrived at the Diyala and found that the Turks had destroyed the bridge which spanned the river near its junction with the Tigris. A dust storm was still blowing, making observation difficult, but by the afternoon it was clear that the Turks were holding the line of the river and meant to contest the crossing. But it was impossible to tell whether they were in strength.

As it was essential to press on hard and give the enemy no rest, it was decided to attempt a crossing that same night. The task fell to the 6th King's Own, of the 38th (Lancashire) Brigade. The river was about 120 yards wide, with a slow current and very steep banks at least 20 feet high. As there was little time available for preparation, it was resolved to make the attempt at the site of the old bridge, where a ramp had been cut through the bank and down to the water's edge on either shore.

It was a bright moonlight night, and, as the first pontoon was lifted over the bank, the whole launching party was

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shot dead within a few seconds. An artillery barrage was put down on the far bank, but the succeeding boats fared little better.

The second pontoon was met by a withering fire as it reached mid-stream ; the crew of five rowers and ten riflemen were killed. A bomb pitched on board the third as it touched the enemy bank, killing the crew and sinking the boat.

But there was no holding back. The men laughed and joked as they worked. As the fourth pontoon pushed out into the stream, one of the crew called out, " It's a bit hot here ; let's have a go higher up." A moment later the boat was drifting slowly downstream with its load of dead, to join the others that floated out into the Tigris and past our camps on the bank next morning.

The Attempt Called Off

By now, there had been over 60 casualties, and it was evident that the crossing was impracticable without further preparation. The attempt was called off for the night.

The day of the 8th was spent in further reconnaissance, and the artillery registered the enemy positions on the far bank. That night the 6th Loyal North Lancashires tried their luck.

This time the artillery bombardment enabled them to gain a footing. Pontoon after pontoon was sunk and many of the crews shot down. By dawn there was not a boat left that could float. But there were nearly 100 Lancashire men on the enemy bank.

The survivors of the crews found themselves holding on to scattered lengths of trench on a front of about 300 yards. They were under constant fire, and counter-attack after counter-attack bore down on them. The Turkish account of the night's fighting bears a wonderful testimony to their gallantry : two Turkish battalions lost all their officers and many hundreds of men in a series of desperate efforts to hurl them back into the river.

Casualties were heavy, but the gallant band was fortunate in discovering what it most needed—a natural defensive position. A break in the river bund had been repaired at some time by building a new embankment that jutted out in the form of a semi-circle on the landward side. Captain Reid, the senior surviving officer, who was awarded the V.C. for his work on this occasion, promptly launched a bombing attack to clear his front, and retired with the remainder of his men to this natural redoubt.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

THE ENTRY INTO BAGHDAD

Though lacking the symbolical significance both of the entry into Jerusalem, with its echoes of the Crusades, and of the march into Damascus, which represented a reoccupation by the Arabs of their own ancient capital, the British ride into Baghdad was inspiring enough. Indeed, it represents the one big moment in the otherwise not very dramatic " Mespot " campaign. The entry was made on March 11th, 1917, and the ancient city of the caliphs rang with acclamations of these liberators from Ross-shire and Rochester, Worcestershire and Wigan.

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A Heroic Little Force

Here, surrounded on all sides except toward the river, the Lancashire men held out through that night, all the next day, and the night following against repeated and determined attacks. The fighting took place in full view of our troops on the south bank, and the artillery and machine-gunners were able to assist with covering fire. The greatest danger to the little garrison was that they might run out of ammunition and bombs.

Attempts were made to get a cable across by means of a rocket, but these failed. Volunteers were called for to swim the river by night, but none got through in the face of the Turkish fire. At midnight on the second night the Turks were actually on the parapet; one more determined rush would have swept the remainder of the defenders, now reduced to 40 men, into the river. But they kept their heads, firing steadily, and the attack was driven back. When relieved the next day they were reduced to their last clip and one bomb, but the ground outside the redoubt was strewn with Turkish dead.

In memory of these men of Lancashire the permanent bridge that spans the Diyala on the spot where they crossed and made their stand bears the name of "Lancashire Bridge."

Whilst the survivors of the Loyals were fighting for their lives on the night of the 9th, a further attempt was being made to get across at other places. Higher upstream the Wiltshires and East Lancashires succeeded in surprising the Turks and crossing with little loss. One Turk was actually bayoneted as he lay covering the stream with his rifle. Finding themselves outflanked, the Turks holding the bank lower down were forced to retire also.

A pontoon bridge was constructed as soon as it was light, and the columns of the 13th Division were soon streaming after the Turks in the direction of Baghdad.

Bridging the Tigris

The weakening of the resistance put up by the Turks on the Diyala was due, as much as anything, to the pressure exerted by General Maude on the far less formidable positions held by the enemy on the right bank of the Tigris.

When he learned that the advance guard of the 13th Division was held up, General Maude ordered the 35th Brigade to cross the Tigris by ferry and to work up the river bank. As soon as the bridging train arrived they threw a bridge over the Tigris at Bawi, four miles above Ctesiphon. The Cavalry Division crossed here on the night of the 8th, followed by the 7th Division.

The Turks were holding a position at Shawa Khan, some five miles south-west of Baghdad, with their left flank resting on the river. There was no natural obstacle like the Diyala to assist the defence, and the Turkish commander had by now abandoned all hope of being reinforced in time to prevent our taking Baghdad.

The British outnumbered the remnants of his shattered army by four to one, and the only course left open to him was to delay our advance for as long as possible, and gain time to evacuate what stores and ammunition he could and destroy the remainder. The dust-storm continued to blow fiercely on the 9th and 10th, and helped to screen the Turkish movements.

On the 9th there was scattered fighting on a very wide front. On the river flank the Turks found ready to their hand a series of strong natural positions running through gardens, huts, and watercuts. Our infantry were exposed all day to enfilade fire from the Turkish guns on the opposite bank, where the Diyala defences were still holding out.

Inland, our troops were seven miles away from the nearest water, and suffered severely from thirst. All attempts to find the Turkish flank failed. The cavalry were for all practical purposes immobilised through want of water and the exhaustion of their horses.

New Enemy Position

Next morning patrols discovered that the enemy had withdrawn and was now occupying a new line of trenches covering the Iron Bridge. Once more the infantry advanced over the open all day under a heavy fire. The guns could afford them little support, owing to the difficulty of observation in the dust storm. The Turks, knowing the ground, and faced with the prospect of not being able to remove all their ammunition for lack of transport, were lavish in their expenditure of shells. The losses of the 7th Division alone amounted to over 1,000 men.

When darkness fell the enemy started firing salvos from all their guns—always a certain indication that they were about to retire. Soon after midnight the glare of flames was visible in the sky above Baghdad. At 1 a.m. a patrol of the 1/4th Gurkhas reported that the enemy gun pits were empty and that there were no Turks in the nullah by the Iron Bridge.

Orders had already been issued for an attack in the early hours of the morning, and at 2 a.m. the 21st Brigade passed through the 19th, whose men were almost incapacitated from want of water. Finding nothing in front of them but a few snipers, the brigade made rapid progress, and just as dawn was breaking, the Black Watch, lean with hunger, fighting, and lack of sleep, were entering Baghdad railway station.

Two hours later the 35th Brigade occupied the suburb opposite the bridge of boats, and the 1/5th Buffs pushed on into the city. As the railway station is outside the city boundary, the honour of being first to enter Baghdad belongs to the Buffs. The Union Jack which one of their officers (Captain Harrison) hoisted on the Citadel now hangs in Canterbury Cathedral.

The Cavalry Also Enter

The Cavalry Division, men and horses worn out, started from their bivouac at 6 a.m. Hearing that the infantry had already entered Baghdad, they marched round the town to Kadhimain, where they captured a few hundred prisoners and four damaged aeroplanes. Patrols were sent out up the river, but they failed to overtake the Turkish rear guard.

After crossing the Diyala, the 13th Division had some stiff fighting, but early on the morning of the 11th the III Corps cavalry—two composite squadrons drawn from the Herts Yeomanry, 10th Lancers, and 32nd Cavalry—entered the city on the left bank, followed by the 6th King's Own.

"Eye-Witness," who was riding that morning with the vanguard, describes the scene as the King's Own entered Baghdad:

"It was the ordinary day's march in column of fours, with guards thrown out, ready to deploy at any moment. As we drew near the city, the high-walled gardens confined us to the road.

"We were talking about something far away—I think it was the Western Front—when the Colonel pointed to some figures emerging through the haze of dust.

"'By Jove!' he said, 'I believe those fellows are bringing us the keys of the Citadel.'

"We saw three men in black approaching along the unmetalled road. . . . As they drew near us they waved their red fezes and called out to us, 'Good morning, how are you?' . . . As we rode on, other groups joined them and they all repeated the same greeting. Then they began to cheer. Among them were girls of fair complexion and

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Specially drawn.

A FIRST SELECTION OF BADGES

From left to right, and top to bottom, the badges are those of: 1—First Life Guards. 2—2nd Life Guards. 3—Royal Horse Guards. 4—1st (King's) Dragoon Guards. 5—2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays). 6—3rd Dragoon Guards (Prince of Wales's). 7—4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. 8—5th Dragoon Guards (Princess Charlotte of Wales's). 9—6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers). 10—7th Dragoon Guards (Princess Royal's). 11—1st Royal Dragoons. 12—2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys). 13—3rd King's Own Hussars. 14—4th Queen's Own Hussars. 15—5th Royal Irish Lancers. 16—6th Dragoons Inniskillings). 17—7th (Queen's Own) Hussars. 18—8th King's Royal Irish Hussars. 19—9th Queen's Royal Lancers. 20—10th Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own).

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unveiled, whose forwardness was embarrassing to men who had seen nothing in the shape of a woman for years beyond black bundles filling their pitchers on the Tigris bank." [1]

Outside the Walls

The army had been looking forward eagerly to seeing Baghdad, the prize for which they had fought and suffered through so many weary months. Apart from the glamour attaching to the fabled city of Haroun al-Raschid—whom one Tommy referred to as Haroun L. Rothschild—it promised a welcome change from the desert, and might mean a rest under comparatively pleasant conditions.

It is sad to think that many of those who took part in its capture were to lay down their lives in the subsequent fighting without having had the opportunity of entering the city of their dreams. The colonel of one regiment said that the order to keep outside Baghdad took all the heart out of his men. After a year and more in the trenches they were not in condition for hard marching. Whole companies were limping, and the stimulus that kept them on their feet was a moral one. In the long and tedious march round the town, the distant houses and minarets became as the houses and minarets of any ordinary eastern city; the clouds of glory with which imagination had invested them disappeared in the prosaic light of day.

Viewed from a distance, and particularly in the kindly light of early morning or late evening, the city presents a fair picture, with its shimmering, peacock-blue and old-gold domes and minarets, set in the dark green of orange groves and date palms. The vivid splashes of colour are an infinite relief to the eye in a land where the prevailing colour is a dusty dun. But there, another side to the picture is given by Candler.

"As in the outskirts of all ancient Moslem cities, death is the one obvious thing. On the inside of the bund that rings the city the crowded graveyards meet, the low tombs all lying east and west with the feet of the faithful pointing towards Mecca, ready to spring up at the trump of doom. There is a smell everywhere of dry decay, and the road beyond the bund leading out into Persia through the desert is marked only by skeletons and calcined bones. Every landmark is a mosque or a tomb. . . ."

The thoughts of some of those in the weary columns trudging round the city may have run on these lines. But the

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HOMO SAPIENS **RECUMBENT**

With a bullet-pocked wall behind them, and various English notice-boards posted about to give a home touch, a party of British Tommies rest their weary bones by the side of the Forceville road, April 13th, 1918. Forceville lies on the Albert—Doullens road, 2 km. on the south-east or Albert side of Acheux, where the famous factory-chimney stood. Like Hénencourt, farther south, Forceville was outside the firing-line, and was best known as a place of rest—though not always, it must be admitted, of rest quite so profound as in this picture.

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Photo : Keystone.

RAINING AGAIN!

Forceville harboured many occupants during the course of the War. In French military occupation until 1915, it then passed into British Third Army hands, to be bequeathed in turn to the Fourth Army. Finally, on July 20th, 1916, the Fourth Army relinquished it to the Fifth. The modern village, whose War Memorial is here visible, contains one British graveyard—an extension of the communal cemetery. Herein lie 300 United Kingdom, 2 New Zealand, 1 Canadian, and 7 German dead.

more fortunate ones who were permitted to enter the city found much to compensate and interest them. "Eye-Witness" found a company of the 37th Dogras squatting contentedly in a vast *serdab*—the underground chamber of the East ventilated by shafts from the roof, where the temperature is always 10 degrees cooler than on the ground floor above. The Jemadar in command shook him by the hand and said with a smile, "Sahib, we have arrived. It is a very good place."

The Citadel "Museum"

The Citadel had served the purpose of an arsenal to a succession of conquerors, and none had ever troubled to remove the junk left by his predecessor. It contained the strangest assortment of arms, ranging from ancient swords and horse-pistols to aggressively modern-looking German gas cylinders. There were guns of all types and ages: those captured in Kut the year before, and ancient brass cannon dating back to the time of Sultan Murad. One venerable piece bore the inscription in Arabic, "Victory is of God, and is at hand," with the date 1546.

Flanking the great entrance gate were two great brass guns engraved with the figures of warriors and mythical beasts. "The Lord of Victory, the Safavi Shah, to destroy all trace of the Turk, decreed the casting of this gun. It belches fire like a dragon and flings flame among them," proclaimed the first in classical Persian. The breech of its stern old companion bore the legend that it was once "the gun of Captain Ali Akbar, of the gunner Mehdi Khan, of the driver Bagir, whose inmate is a world-devouring dragon who roars with awful thunder like a lion." An inscription on the muzzle demanded of all the friends of Ali, "Did'st see the tortures of the Seventh Hell?"

One might have spent weeks exploring. In the covered bazaars grave and bearded merchants sat cross-legged amongst their goods and haggled for hours. There were miles of them, divided from one another according to the trade of the occupants. Crowds collected in the copper market to watch the smiths, stripped to the waist, swinging their enormous hammers in a circle and smiting the white-hot metal with successive blows so swift that the metal rang as from a single stroke.

Most of the streets were just wide enough to admit a horse, but no more. Through a half-open doorway one caught a glimpse of a cool courtyard with rose-bushes, pomegranates, and a splashing fountain. Overhead, the walls of the houses leant outwards until they almost met. The faces of women, veiled or un-

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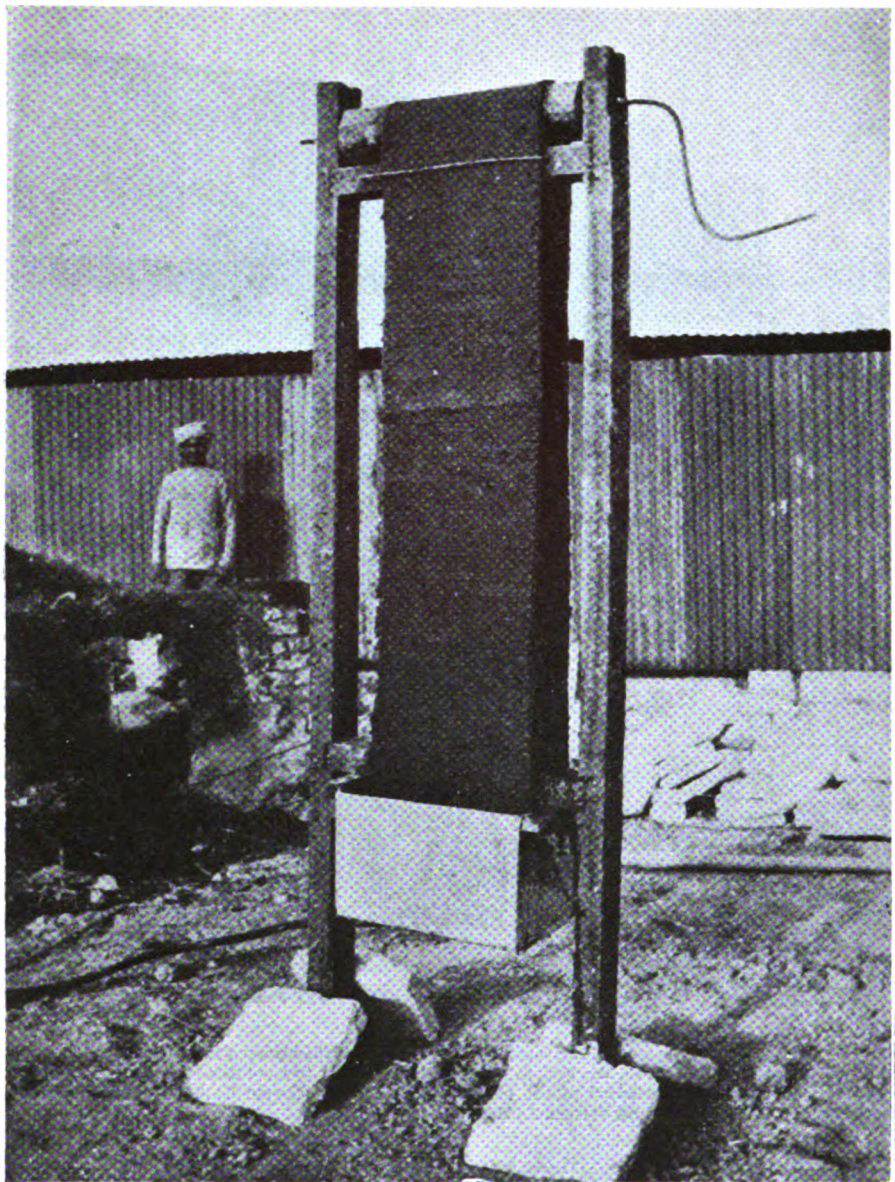

Photo: Topical Press.

A FLY TRAP

Simple, but ingenious. An endless band of coarse cloth attached to rollers, the lower roller immersed in a trough of something sweet and sticky—and, behold! a ruse to snare any fly. Note the handle at the top.

veiled according to the quarter of the city, Moslem, Christian, or Jewish, peeped out from spacious bow windows, framed in fretted woodwork.

The City of *The Arabian Nights*

Above the streets, the roofs, everywhere touching, offered a thoroughfare for miles to lover or adventurer. This was indeed the city of *The Arabian Nights*.

On the first day some officers discovered an hotel where a passable meal could be had, washed down by the red wine of Kirkuk. It was an unbelievable luxury after years in the desert to sit at a table on a terrace overlooking the river and drink one's coffee and smoke a cigarette in peace. Hard by was a garden with English flowers—roses, stocks, wallflowers, and poppies.

The place was soon a centre of attraction for visitors from all the camps around. By the number of horses waiting in the street outside one might have thought a regiment of cavalry was billeted there.

The proprietor inquired the name of the British commander, and, on the following day, the Hotel Tigris had become the Hotel Maude.

The only trace of modernity on the left bank was a broad thoroughfare, driven, regardless of ownership or local feeling, straight through houses, mosques, and anything else that stood in the way, and named, in honour of the captor of Townshend, Halil Pasha Street. By the irony of fate, it proved of the greatest assistance to the new conquerors of Baghdad at the moment when Halil's beaten army was fleeing northward from the city.

In striking contrast to the ancient city were the broken remains, on the right bank of the Tigris, of the great German wireless station, capable of communicating direct with Berlin, and the railway terminus with its name-board inscribed in good German lettering "Baghdad."

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

INDIANS IN BAGHDAD

The entry into the historic metropolis was no formal affair of piercing fanfares and gilded trappings, but a prosaic march by tired, unshaven soldiers in war-stained uniforms, thinking mainly of rest. Nevertheless, crowds of Baghdadis came out to meet and escort the conquerors—a motley throng of welcomers which included Arabs, Persians, Jews, Armenians, Chaldeans, and Christians of divers sects and races. In this photograph Indian troops are seen entering the town by the Citadel Gate.

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The wireless station had recently been completed, and the first message it sent out was that announcing its imminent destruction at the hands of its owners. The giant mast had fallen, crashing through the outer wall of the power-house. One of the great boilers had been blown up, and the other was half-filled with explosive, but the charge had not been fired.

Rush for Tickets to Berlin

At the station there was a rush for the deserted booking-office, and a vain search for tickets to Constantinople and Berlin. The waybill of the last train was found, and one regiment got away with a handsome souvenir in the shape of the station bell.

On the walls of the ruined power-house were traces of the heavy humour of the late owners. One singularly inapt inscription in red paint ran, " It is a long way to Baghdad." There was the inevitable caricature of an Englishman with big teeth and a pipe, and a daub labelled " London," over which a Zeppelin as large as the Crystal Palace was dropping out-size bombs.

Amidst the pleasant oriental scenes of the old town it was difficult to feel any animosity towards the Turk whom we had been fighting for so long and had now dispossessed. But these traces of " Kultur " on the right bank served as a reminder that there was a war on.

Photo : Topical Press.

DRAWING WOOD

Indian soldiers wood-drawing at Qurna (Kurnah). This village, which is situated on a narrow point of land at the junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates, lies 35 miles north of Basra. It saw considerable fighting.

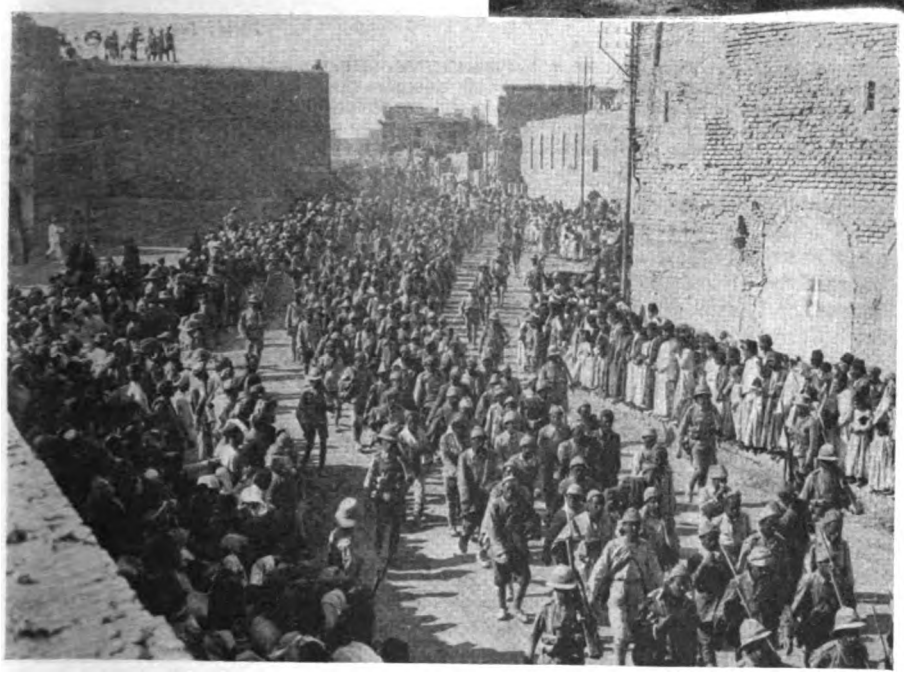

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

CONQUERORS MADE CAPTIVE

A cheerful population witnesses the astonishing sight of Turks—men of a nation which had lorded it unchallenged in Mesopotamia for generation after generation—being marched as prisoners-of-war through the streets of " Mespot's " capital. Education of a sort being fairly common even among the lower-class Arabs, it is easy to understand their enthusiasm for this symbol of Baghdad's restored independence and—it was to be hoped—glory. The picture was taken in New Street.

The capture of Baghdad deprived the enemy of the base from which he had hitherto carried on his operations in Mesopotamia, and also, by closing the main route to Persia from the west, relieved us of a considerable source of anxiety in regard to our Indian frontier. The next task before General Maude was to consolidate the position he had won.

The first thing was to organise the civil administration. Baghdad was a town of 150,000 inhabitants, of whom the majority were Arabs: but there were strong minorities representing

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

VIOLENCE AT VRAIGNES

This village is situated about 2 km. north-east of Estrées-en-Chaussée. When, on the night of March 22nd, 1918, General Gough gave orders for the XVIII Corps to fall back, before dawn, behind the line of the Somme, the XIX and VII Corps sought to secure the main Péronne bridgehead on the line Croix-Moligneaux—Monchy-Lagache—Vraignes, and thence north to Équancourt. All reserves, except one French division and some cavalry in the III Corps area, had been thrown into the fight. Such was one of the many desperate and stirring operations in the March Retreat. . . . The ruined church of Vraignes is here shown as it was photographed exactly a year earlier.

almost every race and creed in the East. The work fell to the Political Department, staffed to a great extent by officers and N.C.O.'s drawn from the regiments composing the force. It is perhaps the greatest tribute of all to our citizen soldiers that they could turn their hand at a moment's notice from fighting to the administration of justice amongst an alien people.

Maude's Threefold Task

The city of Baghdad is without natural defences, and lies open to attack from the north *via* the Tigris, from the east *via* the Diyala, and from the west *via* the Euphrates. General Maude had only six weeks in front of him before the hot weather would set in and make active campaigning impossible. During that time there were three things that he must do to make his position tolerably secure.

The first was to continue the pursuit of the Turkish troops retreating up the Tigris, and seize Samarra, the terminus of the railway.

The second was to intercept the Turkish Corps which was retreating in front of the Russians now advancing from Persia, prevent it from joining hands with the Turks on the Tigris, and, if possible, join hands himself with the Russians.

The third was to occupy points on the Tigris and Euphrates whence we could control the inundations. This last was the most important of the three because, by breaching the bunds on the two rivers when the floods came in a few weeks' time, the enemy could isolate the city and turn the whole of the surrounding country into a vast lake.

To effect these objects four columns were pushed out at once from Baghdad. The 7th Brigade (3rd Division) was despatched to Falluja on the Euphrates. The remainder of the 3rd Division (8th and 9th Brigades) marched up the Diyala to meet the Russians.

The 7th Division followed the Turkish *XVIII Corps* which was retiring up the railway on the right bank of the Tigris. The Cavalry Division and the III Corps (13th and 14th Divisions) advanced up the left bank of the Tigris with a strong flank guard out to the east, where the Turkish *XIII Corps* was retiring before the Russians.

Tough Work on the Tigris

The stiffest fighting after the capture of Baghdad took place on the Tigris. The *XVIII Corps*, now reinforced, fought desperately for the railhead at Samarra, whilst the *XIII Corps* drove home attack after attack on our right flank on the eastern bank of the river, with the object of taking the

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Photo: Keystone.

VRAIGNES RESTORED

The dawn of March 23rd, 1918, found the 50th Division of the XIX Corps holding a line passing just in front of Vraignes. But the losses in the corps had been heavy, and the survivors had been marching or fighting steadily for two days and one night. Before the morning of the 24th, therefore, a further withdrawal was ordered and carried out, the British taking up a line on the Somme itself. Vraignes in consequence was re-entered by the Germans, whose last act there—according to a British journalist arriving soon after—had been to burn, conscientiously, every cottage in the village prior to abandoning it in their 1917 withdrawal.

pressure off their comrades holding the railhead.

On March 19th the 7th Brigade succeeded in occupying Falluja on the Euphrates, which the small Turkish garrison evacuated.

We captured a few prisoners, a launch, and many rifles. The cavalry, pushing on towards Sakhlawiya, engaged two gunboats towing coracles full of Turkish infantry, and inflicted some loss on them. But the bulk of the enemy got away to Ramadi, 25 miles upstream.

The Turks succeeded in cutting the dam at Sakhlawiya and flooding a considerable extent of country. In a normal season the flood-water would have washed away the bund protecting the railway and the city, but in 1917 the river was exceptionally low, and the bund held. The elements, which had so consistently fought against us during the attempt to relieve Kut, had remained as constantly on our side during the advance to Baghdad, and the luck still held.

The 7th Division left Baghdad on the evening of March 13th, and after marching northwards all night along the railway, came up next morning with the Turks holding an entrenched position covering Mushahida station.

The Turks evidently expected us to be tied to the river owing to the difficulty of obtaining water inland, and had strengthened this part of their line accordingly. But they were destined to be disappointed.

Early in the day the 32nd Lancers discovered the Turkish flank, which rested on a mound less than a mile west of the railway. General Fane accordingly decided to attack astride the railway, with the 28th Brigade on the right and the 21st Brigade on the left.

Battle of Mushahida

It was a very simple action, and very gallant. But for the enemy fire and the dropping casualties, the whole affair went off like a well-planned field-day. The 28th Brigade on the right advanced steadily in long lines with the enemy's shrapnel bursting around them, but on the whole met with surprisingly little opposition—the bulk of the Turkish infantry were occupying the trenches nearer the river.

The 21st Brigade were up against a stiffer proposition. The trenches on their front were strongly held, and they came under a heavy enfilade fire from the mound on the extreme right of the Turkish line. The fire was so intense that a platoon of the Black Watch changed commanders six times in as many minutes. The survivors pressed on unchecked, led by a lance-corporal.

A gallant rush by the two right com-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CAMOUFLAGE NEAR CAMBRIN

The village of Cambrin, illustrations of whose "Harley Street" appeared on pages 974 and 975, is once more visible through the trees on the right of this photograph. Taken in March, 1918, the picture shows the Béthune—La Bassée road being camouflaged with strips of sacking. Heavy fighting took place hereabouts in 1915, and again in April, 1918.

panies of the Black Watch cleared the enemy trenches nearest the railway, and now the left battalion of the 28th Brigade, the 56th Rifles, swarmed up the railway embankment and poured in a deadly enfilade fire against the rest of the line. This took the pressure off the Black Watch and the 1/8th Gurkhas on their left, who dashed forward and carried the trenches in front of them at the point of the bayonet.

The Turks still clung desperately to the mound. The final assault was carefully prepared. The artillery moved forward to close range, and parties of machine-gunners worked their way out on the flank in order to bring covering fire to bear. At 6.30 p.m. the whole line rose and charged home, Black Watch, Gurkhas, and Bhopal infantry vying with one another for the honour of being first in the enemy trenches.

Casualties Again Heavy

The troops had now been marching and fighting continuously for 24 hours, with nothing to drink save what they carried in their water-bottles. Ammunition was almost exhausted, and casualties had been heavy. The Black Watch had been worst hit, with a loss of 43 per cent. of their effective strength, including 10 officers. But their spirit was high, and Colonel Wauchope, of the Black Watch, who was commanding the 21st Brigade, decided to take the risk of a further advance of four miles over broken country in the dark, followed by a night-attack on the station.

Photo: S. H. Geller.

CHILDREN NEAR CAMBRIN

It was just north of this village that the enemy launched his formidable attack of April 9th and 10th, 1918, which so nearly proved our undoing. To-day finds two British War cemeteries at Cambrin, both within a mile of what for most of the War constituted the German front-line trenches. One of these burial-grounds—Cambrin Churchyard Extension—is remarkable for a very large number of grouped graves of battalions from the Battle of Loos.

After replenishing ammunition and water, the brigade moved on again, leaving the 9th Bhopals to garrison the mound. The Black Watch, now reduced to little over 200 strong, were reinforced by two companies of the Seaforths. Progress was slow, but just before midnight they reached the vicinity of the station. Colonel Wauchope at once extended his men and charged, reaching the station just in time to pour a heavy fire into the last coach of a departing train. The few remaining Turks were captured or put to flight.

When dawn broke it was found that the enemy had abandoned the remainder of his entrenchments and was in full retreat northwards. Mushahida was a well-planned and hard-fought action, resulting in a victory which would have thrilled England if it had been won on any other front.

Keary's Column at Baquba

By March 18th a force had been collected at the village of Baquba, some 30 miles north-east of Baghdad on

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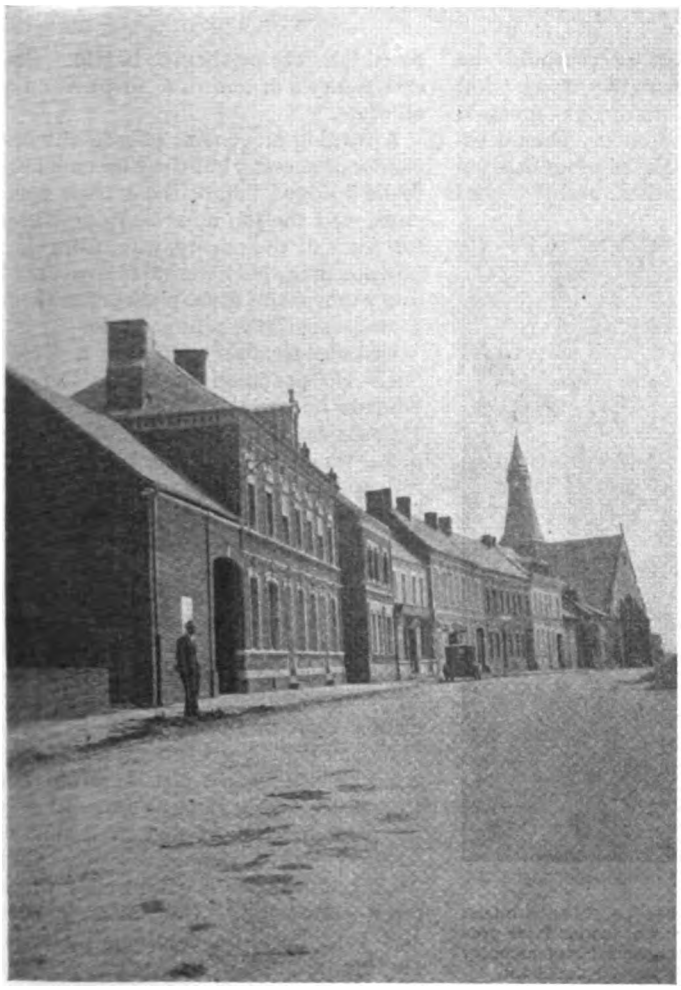
the Diyala river. This consisted of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades of the 3rd Division, and five batteries of artillery, the whole under the command of General Keary. Baquba stands out in the memory of those who were there at this time. Compared with the usual run of Arab habitations it was a delightful place. The village was surrounded by extensive groves of orange and lemon trees, and great baskets of the fruit could be bought for a few pence. There were also excellent fish to be had, netted in the Diyala.

Indeed, the whole of the country that Keary's Column was to traverse on its way to meet the Russians was the most complete contrast to anything that we had seen on the arid banks of the Tigris. Everywhere were lush meadows, well watered by numerous irrigation canals. The horses tasted green food for the first time in years. In places one rode for miles over fields carpeted with spring flowers—wild white narcissus and red anemone. There was plenty of small game, and one gunner officer who had a shot-gun can remember bagging ten brace of black partridge in a garden of Persian roses.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

COME TO THE COOKHOUSE DOOR, BOYS!

The heading is not strictly applicable, for the boys have already been to the cookhouse, and are seen returning from it with smiles on their faces and containers of hot food in their hands The scene of this photograph is Mailly-Maillet, and the date April 24th, 1917. Observe the minor flood through which the soldiers are wading.



At first the column met with little opposition. The enemy fell back before us. Abu Jisra and Shahraban fell into our hands.

Delays were caused by the need to bridge numerous irrigation canals; more pontoons had to be sent up from Baghdad; but at last the advance guard emerged from the gardens of Shahraban, crossed two more deep canals, and found themselves advancing over an open plain, with the great bulk of the Jabal Hamrin looming up menacingly in front of them, not 10 miles away.

Fine Cavalry Work

They soon came under a heavy fire from a number of guns sited in the hills. A picture that stands out in the mind is that of the 14th Battery, galloping into action with the white puffs of shrapnel bursting all around them. On the command "Halt! Action front!" the teams pulled up and stood like rocks under the fire whilst the guns were unlimbered. It was a matter of seconds before the first round was off and the teams driving away.

The infantry worked their way forward and finally found themselves brought to a standstill by the Ruz canal, a high-banked and unfordable stream 30 feet wide. The bridges had been destroyed and the crossings were covered by machine guns sited in tier after tier of the foothills beyond.

Photo: S. H. Geller.

MAILLY-MAILLET—SLIGHTLY DRIER

This village west of Miraumont has already been featured more than once in our "Then and Now" series, and little of note remains to be said of it. At the time of the inaugural attacks in the Battle of Arras, some two weeks prior to the date of the upper photograph, it lay some 10 miles south of the southern flank of our attack. It was, in consequence, not in the battle-area proper, although it felt the proximity in many ways.

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General Keary was up against a difficult task. Before leaving Baghdad he had been told that the only opposition he would be likely to meet would come from the beaten remnants of the Turkish *XIII Corps* fleeing before the victorious Russians. It was now evident that the position was a very different one. The Russians were still many miles distant, held up, it was reported, by a weak Turkish rear guard in the Pai Taq pass. Had we then known the state to which they had been reduced by the outbreak of the Revolution, we should have placed less faith in their promises of co-operation.

Meanwhile, Keary's Column, consisting of two weak brigades, found itself faced by the greater part of the fighting strength of the *XIII Corps*, occupying as formidable a natural position as could be found.

The Turkish commander was not in the least hurried, nor were his troops beaten. All he was concerned with was to hold up both Russians and British for long enough to enable him to get away across the Diyala by the Qizil Ribat Bridge. He could then march via Delli Abbas to the Shatt al Adhaim, where he would be well placed to launch an attack on the flank of a British force advancing up the Tigris towards Samarra.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

LE HAUT-EN-BAS, NEAR CASSEL

The hamlet of which this is a modern view lies due north of St. Marie-Cappel, on the brow of a rise in the main Bailleul—Caestre—Cassel road. Cassel itself is situated a few kilometres to the north-east—the opposite direction to that in which the camera is here facing. Le Haut-en-Bas, though no doubt it saw many ups-and-downs, was never in the fighting-area of which, however, its elevation provided a remarkably good view.

Orders to Push On

However, at this stage we were unaware of the real position, and still intent on the original plan of crushing the *XIII Corps* between the upper and nether millstones; and our greatest anxiety was lest the enemy should escape across the Diyala before our Allies could come up with them and the combined forces bring them to battle. General Keary's orders were to push on at all costs.

A turning movement offered the best chance of success, but the Ruz canal had to be bridged before the troops could cross, and the job must be done within full view of the enemy, who, from their position in the hills, were able to overlook every movement in the plain below them. Thus a surprise was impossible.

General Keary's plan was a simple one. He proposed to throw the 9th Brigade and two battalions of the 8th Brigade across the canal and into the hills, whence they would proceed to roll up the Turkish position and throw the enemy back against the Diyala. But things did not work out according to plan.

There were no large-scale maps of this part of the world in existence. A civilian surveyor always accompanied every column moving in new country, and the troops grew accustomed to the incongruous sight of the map-making party performing their work completely oblivious of every other consideration save that of producing maps as expeditiously as possible. They had a habit of erecting over themselves as they worked an enormous umbrella, which often drew fire. Our airmen were also kept busy on mapping by aerial photography.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

CASSEL FROM THE DISTANCE

A long-distance view of the town from the south. It was here that on September 9th, 1918, there took place a conference, under the presidency of General Foch, to settle the details of the Flanders programme of action in what was to prove the War's final offensive. This photograph (a contemporary one) was taken in a heavy mist, but the church-tower crowning Cassel hill may be picked out.

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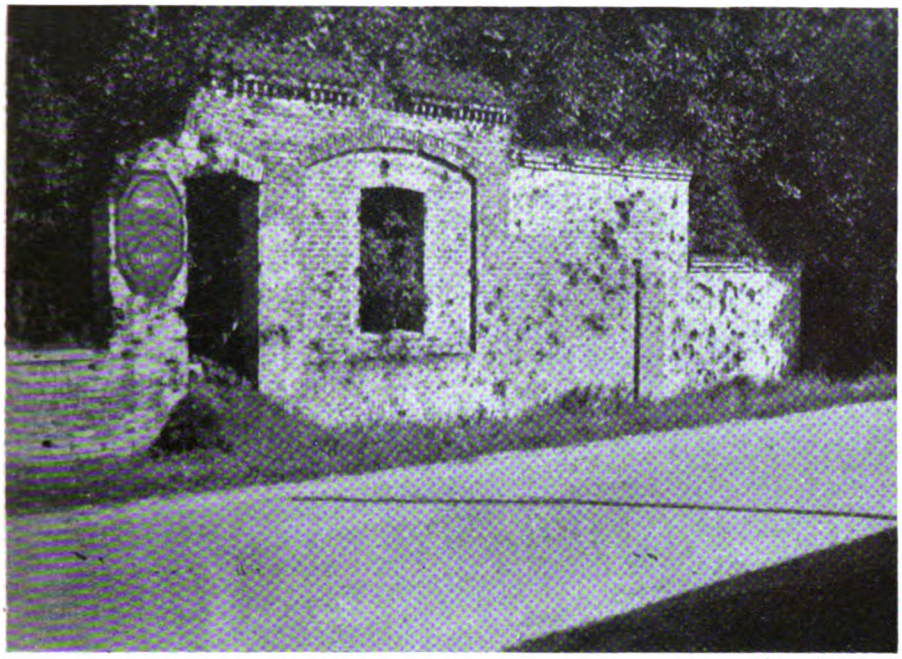

Photo: A. J. Insall.

REMAINS OF HINGES CHÂTEAU

The ironical feature concerning this château, 4 km. north-west of Béthune, is that it survived the War almost unscathed, only to be burnt to the ground some years later. The above is almost the only wall still standing. Numerous British formations used the building, at different times, as a billet or H.Q., and Hinges itself was closely connected, from early 1915 onward, with the R.F.C. and R.A.F. In April, 1918, the village was all but in the front line.

Owing to the inadequacy of maps available, and various other minor details such as the need for bridging unsuspected canals, it was not until the morning of March 25th that the troops detailed to carry out the attack arrived in position.

Mountain Warfare

The scene of this fight was a complete change from the Mesopotamian plain. It was the North-West Frontier in miniature, and in August, 1914, any of the battalions engaged would have been entirely at home in this tumbled mass of rocky, precipitous hills. But in 1917 we were not in a position to profit by this pre-war skill. All the regiments with the force had undergone more than one incarnation, and it is doubtful if there was a sepoy or a Tommy on the ridge that morning who had seen a frontier campaign.

An advance at dawn established us on the first line of crests. Beyond this was a second crest-line flanking the Khaniqin road about 2,500 yards away. It was difficult to make out the enemy's position: they held no regular line, and we could not tell where their flanks lay. They appeared to be split up into small parties of skirmishers, making use of every irregularity in the ground.

Their artillery was admirably handled, and our troops made the discovery that shell-fire amongst rocky hills was considerably more unpleasant than on the soft yielding clay of the Tigris valley. We were up against troops who had been fighting the Russians for years in precisely this sort of country.

In hill-fighting the danger does not come from the lines of skirmishers to be seen on the ridge in front; it lies rather in the fear of envelopment by unseen parties working round the flanks. It is impossible to tell, too, until the bullets come cracking over, whether one is standing on dead ground, or exposed to fire from some projecting crag on another ridge. To those who do not know the tricks of the trade it is jumpy work.

"Eye-Witness" rode across the bridge over the Ruz canal that morning, and saw the brigade transport being heavily shelled. Leaving his horse in a sheltered hollow, he climbed into the hills, following the wire of the field telephone.

As in 1914 . . .

"I struck a knoll held by a mixed platoon of Dorsets and Mahrattas, once more together as in 1914, and commanded by an officer[1] who had been wounded at Ctesiphon. He had been hit by another bullet through his arm a few minutes before. A young Havildar was tapping away with his Lewis gun at some black figures which kept crossing a ridge at long range. He was a mere boy, not yet twenty . . .

[1] Major Clemson, of the Dorsets.

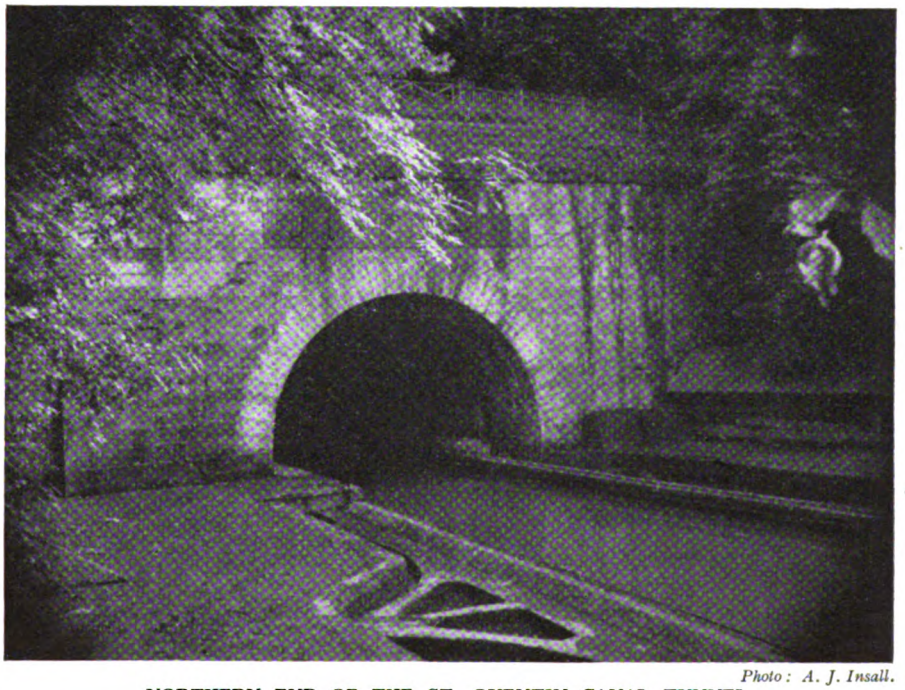

Photo: A. J. Insall.

NORTHERN END OF THE ST. QUENTIN CANAL TUNNEL

To-day one of the most idyllically peaceful spots on the former Western Front, this tunnel-mouth in 1918 was close to the scene of some of the bitterest fighting of the War's final months. On September 29th, the defenders of this section of the Hindenburg Line put up a desperate defence against the 27th American Division; and the 5th and 3rd Australian Divisions, which had been intending to go through the Americans to more distant objectives, had to combine with their allies in wearing the enemy down. The village of Bony, near the tunnel, was the main theatre of conflict.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE BUTTE DE POLYGONE

In pre-war days the Polygone was the race-course of Ypres. Its situation is in the centre of Polygon Wood, which lies 7 km. due east of Ypres and 2 km. due south of Zonnebeke. The wood was occupied by the Germans on October 24th, 1914, but after the desperate fighting of November 11th they retained only a small part. Subsequently it dropped out of the news until 1917, when, after the enemy had penetrated our lines between it and Tower Hamlets on September 25th, the 5th Australian Division stormed the point the day following. This photograph, taken while the Butte (which means embankment or mound) was on the New Zealand Division front, shows how the appalling rains of late 1917 had left the ground still heavily waterlogged in February, 1918.

"What the depression concealed between us and them nobody knew. The Turks had come in with a machine gun between us and a company on higher ground to the right, enfilading them, forcing them back: they were bringing it to bear on another ridge nearer us, and we saw the garrison retire. On the left, the Gurkhas held higher ground. A party of Turks had worked round under cover to within bombing distance. . . . It looked like an impasse, a sticky day's fighting, and probably a retirement at night."

"Eye-Witness" was right. The Turks succeeded in working round our right flank, and we were forced to retire under a withering fire from the enemy guns.

Manchesters, 93rd Burmans, and Baluchis from the reserve fought a desperate rearguard action, enabling the remainder of our infantry to withdraw. By nightfall we were across the Ruz canal once more, having sustained casualties that amounted to a third of the troops engaged.

Jabal Hamrin was a reverse, but a gallant one. There had been no help for it. General Keary had to take the chance, but the Turks were too strong for us, and too well handled.

After this, the Turks were able to carry out their withdrawal over the Diyala unmolested. It was not until April 1st that we could cross the Jabal Hamrin and move on to Qizil Ribat, picking up a few of their stragglers on the way.

There, the long-expected meeting with the Russians took place when a sotnia of Cossacks, great, bearded fellows mounted on shaggy ponies, rode into our camp escorted by a squadron of the 13th Lancers.

But the reason for our coming was no more. The Turks had slipped away. After a meal together, washed down by our few remaining drops of rum, both sides retired: the Russians towards their main body on the Khaniqin road, the British towards Baquba and Baghdad.

Battle of the "Marl Plain"

Some days before the meeting of Keary's Column with the Russians the consequences of the escape of the Turkish *XIII Corps* were already being felt by our cavalry and the 13th Division on the Tigris. From March 26th onwards our outposts in the neighbourhood of Diltawa were in constant touch with enemy patrols, and the cavalry had

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several smart skirmishes with Turkish horsemen on the right bank of the Diyala. There was imminent danger of the two Turkish Corps uniting.

On the 29th, the 13th Division averted the danger by defeating the Turks in a fight near Diltawa which came to be known as the Battle of the "Marl Plain."[1] The 39th and 40th Brigades attacked frontally over ground as smooth as a tennis court. For hundreds of yards there was not an inequality that would have given bias to a marble; and the whole was baked by the sun to the consistency of a cement floor.

The 5th Wilts of the 40th Brigade started a bare 500 strong and lost 200, including 7 officers, in covering the last 1,000 yards of open. But they got in and drove the Turks from their rifle pits. The Warwicks, Glosters, and North Staffords of the 39th Brigade attacked on top of a 10-mile march: their attack went through without a pause, and they gained all their objectives.

During the night the Turks fell back towards their base in the hills, and the danger of their joining hands with their comrades of the *XVIII Corps* on the Tigris was averted for the moment.

Now that the left bank of the Tigris was clear of enemy, the 7th Division was able to resume its advance along the railway.

Railway Station Skirmish

On April 8th, Easter Sunday, the 28th Brigade came up with the Turks holding a position astride the railway at Balad station. A brisk action followed: the enemy had mounted machine guns on the station roof, and put up a stout fight. But by 2.30 p.m. the Leicesters and the 51st and 53rd Sikhs had rushed the place, capturing 200 prisoners, with a loss of only 56 casualties to themselves.

At Balad, too, we were fortunate in capturing 30 railway trucks, abandoned by the Turks on a siding running to some gravel pits. The enemy had removed all their rolling stock before we entered Baghdad, and now for the first time we were able to make use of the railway to bring up supplies.

We got over the minor difficulty of having no engine by harnessing the mules of the ammunition column to the trucks. The new link in our communications came to be known as Catty's Express, named after the ingenious transport officer responsible for this novel experiment in railway traction.

[1] The *Official History* calls it "The Affair of Duqma," after the name of a village nearby. The site of the battle was marked on our maps as "Marl Plain."

Photo: A. J. Insall.

BUTTE'S NEW BRITISH CEMETERY, POLYGONE

There are two British cemeteries in Polygon Wood, of which the one here shown occupies part of the ground seen in the War photograph. On the Butte de Polygone itself stands a memorial to the 5th Australian Division, while in the record building of the cemetery is a memorial to New Zealand missing. The burial-ground, which was not created until after the Armistice, is a large one, and contains 1,317 United Kingdom, 561 Australian, 167 New Zealand, and 48 Canadian graves. The surrounding wood has now become quite dense again, although few trees as yet are larger than saplings.

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From now until the end of April the I Corps on the right bank of the Tigris was pressing on towards the enemy's railhead at Samarra, whilst the III Corps on the left bank was defeating a succession of attempts on the part of the Turkish *XIII Corps* to drive home a thrust on our flank.

It was a month of heavy and almost continuous fighting, the Turks striving to delay us, and General Maude intent on capturing the enemy's railhead before the full force of the hot weather should be felt, making active operations impossible. Both sides were fighting against time.

It will make the story clearer if we follow first the operations of General Marshall's III Corps, and then switch over to the other bank of the Tigris to watch the progress of General Cobbe's I Corps towards the final objective of Samarra.

A Blow at Our Flank

We have seen how, at the Battle of the Marl Plain, the 13th Division defeated the first attempt on the part of the Turkish *XIII Corps* to drive home a thrust against our flank. After this the situation on the left bank of the Tigris, where our III Corps and the Cavalry Division were operating, was as follows: a strong Turkish detachment held the line of the Shatt al Adhaim, whilst the *XIII Corps*, based on the Jabal Hamrin, still hovered on our right flank.

General Maude had intended to force the passage of the Adhaim on the night of April 11th, but on the 10th the Cavalry Division reported that the Turks were advancing in strength from the Jabal Hamrin. Ali Isan Bey, who commanded the *XIII Corps*, was one of the ablest generals in the Turkish Army, and he intended to exploit his strategic position on our flank to the utmost.

This news entailed a postponement of the operation on the Adhaim whilst two brigades, the 39th and 40th, were sent across the desert to assist the cavalry. Our horsemen fell back slowly before the enemy, taking up position after position. Each time the Horse Artillery guns ("S" and "V" Batteries, R.H.A.) took a heavy toll of the advancing columns, forcing them to deploy.

Finally, Ali Isan Bey decided to give our cavalry the *coup de grâce*, and sent a

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSS-ROADS IN BOURLON

The War history of Bourlon belongs mainly to the Battle of Cambrai, November, 1917. At the outset of the battle, Bourlon Ridge, Wood, and village formed objectives of the greatest importance, and enemy machine guns in the wood caused great trouble at first (November 20th). At 10.30 a.m., on November 23rd, the 40th Division attacked the wood, captured it after 4½ hours of heavy fighting, and pressed on into the village. This, however, they did not succeed in taking; and although we did take it during the afternoon of the 24th, the enemy reclaimed it on the 25th, after which it remained just within his lines. This photograph shows the ruined houses as seen in October, 1918.

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Photo: Keystone.

A BUSY DAY IN MODERN BOURLON

If the British failed to take Bourlon in 1917, it is no less true that the Germans failed equally to dislodge them from the vicinity. At one time seven enemy divisions were pitted against three Allied, yet failed to push the latter farther back than the top of the ridge. On another occasion an advanced company of the 17th Royal Fusiliers greatly distinguished itself when caught unawares by a hostile assault between Bourlon and Mœuvres; one platoon held its position until annihilated, while the other three moved back. Bourlon village was eventually recaptured on September 27th, 1918, by the 4th Canadian Division, the 3rd Canadian Division taking the Wood.

division to make a turning movement round its flank and take it in rear. By a happy chance the 39th and 40th Brigades arrived on the scene at this moment, after a 20-mile march from the Adhaim. The result was an encounter battle in the open.

The advancing lines of British and Turkish infantry were separated and hidden from one another by a gentle rise, the one bit of raised ground in the landscape. The Cheshires and Royal Welch Fusiliers, who were leading, at once fixed bayonets and raced for the crest. A few moments later the Turks were surprised by the sudden appearance of a long line of khaki tipped with steel on the sky-line 600 yards off. This was their first intimation that there was any British infantry within 20 miles.

Recovering rapidly from their surprise, the Turks poured in a staggering fire. Our infantry lay down with bayonets fixed. The enemy continued to come on in waves. Seeing the danger, the leading field batteries at once galloped up and came into action in close support of the infantry, pouring a devastating fire into the advancing Turks at a range 1,200 yards. This action proved decisive. The Turks fell back a few hundred yards and occupied a nullah, where they hung on for the rest of the day.

A Running Fight

That night the Turks withdrew, leaving over 300 dead on the field, and took up a new position some six miles farther back. By this time our 35th Brigade had come up, and on the 13th the enemy were hustled out again.

The Turkish retirement was well ordered. They kept up their old rear-guard tactics, holding a series of rifle pits echeloned in great depth. They never offered a definite objective, but forced us to deploy again and again by the fire of their machine guns skilfully concealed on the flank. Before daybreak on the 15th, they had melted away into the cover of the hills.

Relieved for the moment of the danger to his flank, General Marshall returned once more to the task he had had in hand before Ali Isan Bey's irruption from the hills—the crossing of the Adhaim.

The River Adhaim rises in the Jabal Hamrin, and scores a deep and erratic course for some 40 miles over the plain before emptying into the Tigris. The actual stream at this time was nowhere more than 80 yards broad, but the river-bed was in many places as

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A SHELL FACTORY

A scene in the interior of a British shell factory during the War. The Ministry of Munitions was formed, with Mr. Lloyd George as Minister, on July 1st, 1915, after which all responsibility for the output of munitions rested with it. The new ministry was backed up by the famous Munitions of War Act, better known as the "Slavery Act," restricting the movement of workers from one area to another.

much as a mile across, and bounded on each side, where the flood waters in times past had bitten deep into the soft clay of the Tigris valley, by precipitous cliffs as much as 40 feet high. Much of the river-bed was covered with tamarisk bushes and low scrub, which swarmed with small game.

The Turks occupied a strong position along the crest of the cliffs on the far bank. One flank rested securely on the Tigris; on the other flank cavalry patrols were thrown wide to give warning of any attempt at envelopment.

General Marshall's plan was to exploit the enemy's fear of being enveloped, and punch home the decisive blow in his centre, where it was least expected. A cavalry brigade stood ready to go through the hole made by the infantry.

Another Lancashire Crossing

The passage of the Adhaim was carried out by the Lancashire men of the 38th Brigade, the same gallant battalions which had forced the passage of the Diyala just over a month before, when the army was still on the road to Baghdad.

Soon after nightfall on April 17th, the various assaulting columns crept down into the scrub that covered the river bed. The Loyals on the extreme right crossed by a ford that had been discovered by their scouts a few days before. Forming up on the far side of the stream, they charged up the cliffs, taking the Turks completely by surprise.

Meanwhile, a few miles lower down, the East Lancashires and Prince of Wales's Volunteers were making their way through the scrub to the river, each company carrying a pontoon. The two battalions were ferried across in the darkness, unperceived by the Turks on the cliffs above. Dawn saw them scaling the cliffs. The enemy's attention had been distracted by the crossing of the Loyals, farther north, and the first warning that the Turkish pickets had was the sound of a ringing British cheer: the next minute the Lancashire men were upon them with the bayonet.

The three battalions that were across now dug themselves in, and were joined soon after by the King's Own. Meanwhile, the sappers were bridging the stream, and the 35th Brigade was coming up in support.

Just after midday the whole brigade moved forward again, under cover of a hurricane bombardment from their own artillery and from the gunboats anchored in the Tigris. The Turks broke, and it was now the turn of the cavalry.

Cassell's Brigade [1] had been resting all day unsaddled, the horses watered, the men fresh and keen, waiting for this

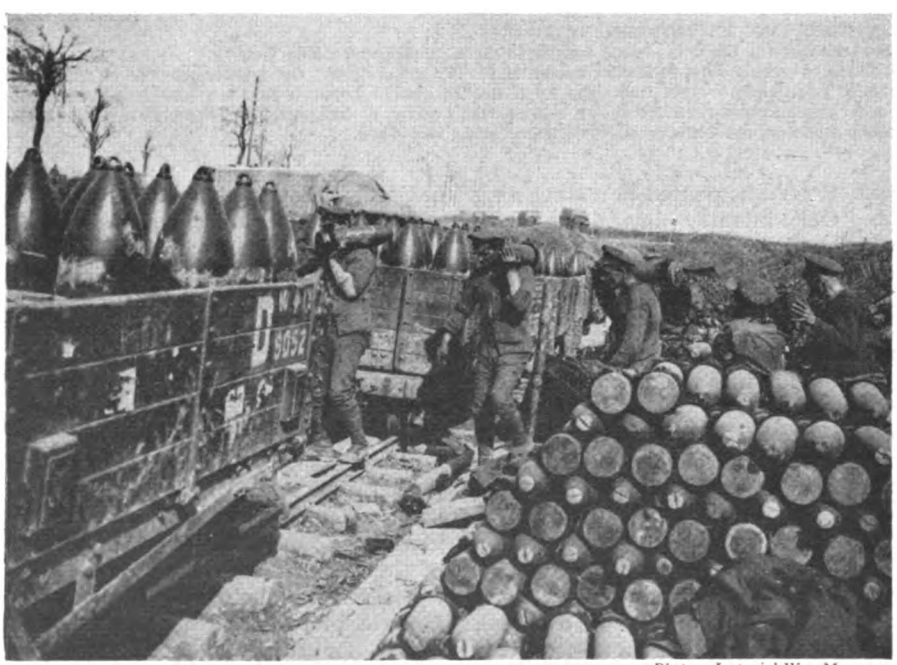

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UNLOADING AT A DUMP

Removing shells from railway-trucks at a dump near Bapaume, March 23rd, 1918. The Ministry of Munitions was abolished in 1920, when in its place was set up a Disposal Board for liquidating armament contracts and disposing of the vast quantities of surplus war-material. Other prominent Ministers of Munitions, after Mr. Lloyd George, were Mr. Churchill and Lord Inverforth.

[1] Cassell's Cavalry Brigade was a "scratch" formation consisting of two guns of "S" Battery, R.H.A., two guns from D/66 Battery, R.F.A., a squadron of Hertfordshire Yeomanry, the 21st Cavalry, and two squadrons 32nd Lancers. It did extremely well. The fact that General Maude found it necessary to form this brigade, when he already had a whole Cavalry Division, shows the tremendous amount of work that there is for cavalry to do in open warfare.

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moment. They went through the infantry at a gallop, cut the enemy off from the river, and proceeded to round them up, pursuing for a distance of more than 15 miles.

A Brilliant Success

The whole operation had been a brilliant success. At a cost of seventy-three casualties we had forced the passage of the Adhaim and completely destroyed the Turkish force opposing us.

While the Turks held the line of the Adhaim it was impossible for the I Corps on the right bank of the Tigris to continue its advance towards Samarra. Now, relieved of the immediate danger of a stroke against his right flank, and able once more to use the river for bringing up supplies and ammunition, General Cobbe could resume the offensive.

On April 19th, the day after the passage of the Adhaim, the 7th Division came up with the Turks holding a strongly entrenched position at Istabulat. The enemy left rested securely on the Tigris. The front line of trenches ran along a low ridge to a point about a mile south of the railway; from here it bent back, in order to secure the exposed flank against envelopment, and ran parallel to the railway for several miles. Through the centre of the position ran the Dujail canal, dividing it into two distinct sectors.

The bulk of the Turkish *XVIII Corps* were present and determined to put up a stiff fight for their railhead at Samarra. It was a tough proposition for the attackers, who would have to advance over a dead-flat plain, overlooked the whole way by the Turks lining the ridge.

On the 19th, strong fighting patrols succeeded in driving in the enemy's advanced troops and established themselves firmly within 2,000 yards of the main position.

April 20th was spent in reconnaissance and preparation for the attack, and that night the assaulting troops formed up behind the outpost line, ready to go forward at dawn.

A Bird's-eye View

Standing on the ancient Median wall, an observer could see the whole battlefield spread out before him. The 21st Brigade was north of the Dujail canal, the 19th Brigade south of it. The infantry moved steadily forward, line upon line, in open order, over a bare plain swept by fire.

At 6.30 a.m. the Black Watch and Gurkhas reached the foot of the ridge; the artillery barrage now lifted, leaving them face to face with their enemy, separated by only a few yards. With a wild cheer they swept up the slope and into the Turkish redoubts. A desperate fight ensued with bomb and bayonet. The Turks launched counter-attack after counter-attack, and it was only

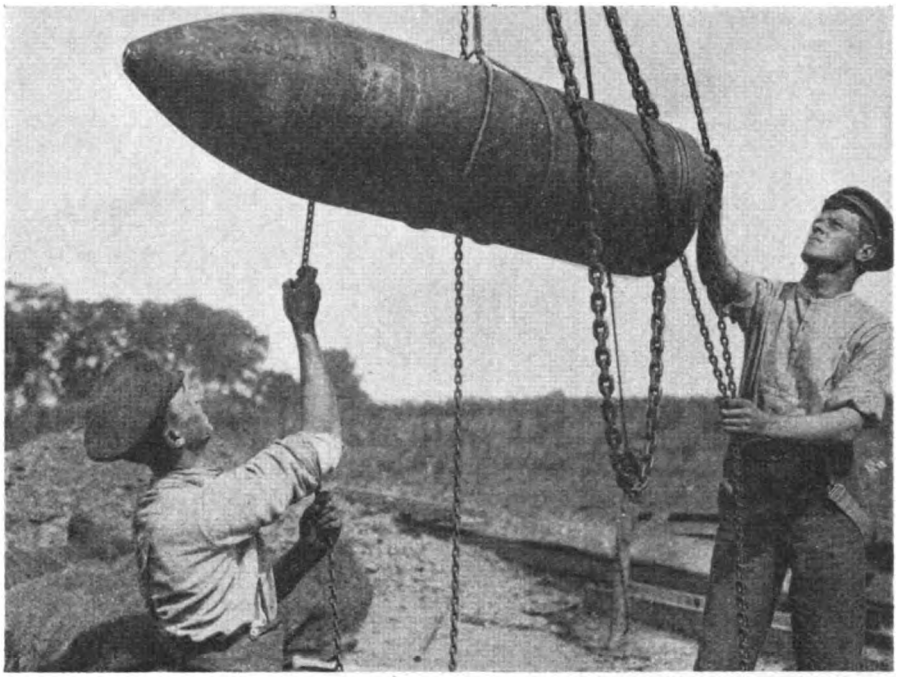

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HOISTING A 15-INCH GIANT

A single one of these monsters of destruction represents no small amount of money, and such is its weight that, even with block-and-tackle to help, two men are required to haul the missile into the air. Pictures such as this give some idea of the immense amount of capital locked up in the surplus material with which, after the Armistice, the Disposal Board had to deal. In all, the Board received £350,000,000 through its transactions.

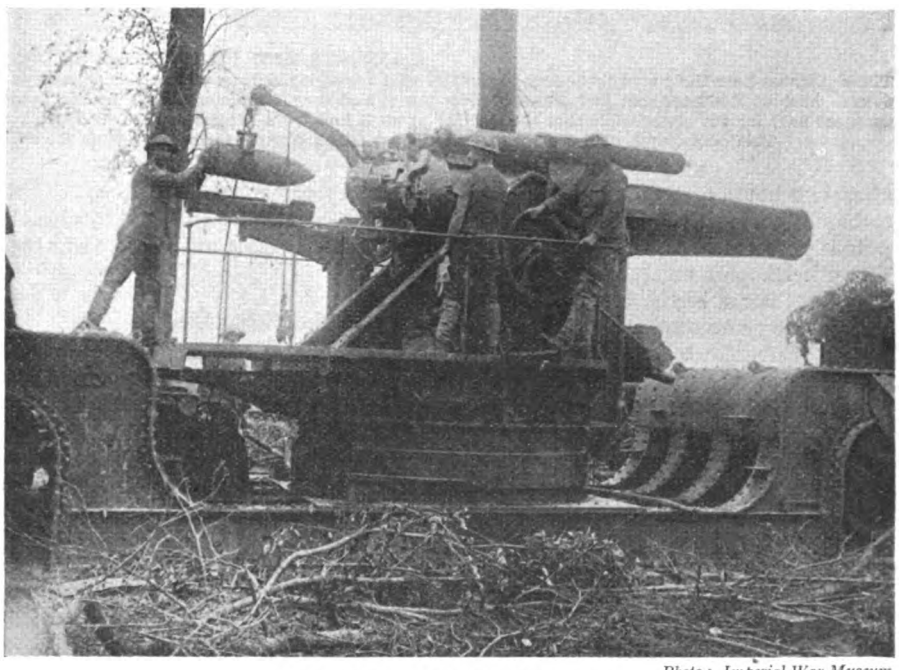

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LOADING A 12-INCH HOWITZER

A scene near Brielen, August 1st, 1917; the howitzer is on a railway mounting. Many of the munitions left over after the Armistice were broken up for use in other forms; but a certain amount of the goods for disposal consisted of other than destructive material, and it is interesting to note that before the end of 1920 the Disposal Board had sold wool to the value of £60,000,000

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BONNETS AND KILTS IN LAPUGNOY

These pictures bear their own testimony to the fact that Lapugnoy did not suffer serious damage by bombardment. It stands on the Clarence rivulet 6 km. west of Béthune, and just south of Chocques; and it was therefore never nearer than 9 km.-odd from the firing-line, maintaining this nearness only for the short while that the line lay about 3 km. from the eastern fringe of Béthune during the German Lys offensive of April, 1918. This photograph shows a roll-call of the 1st Black Watch in process outside their billets in the village on April 10th, 1918.

after two hours of uninterrupted hand-to-hand fighting that we were in undisputed possession of the north bank. The 9th Bhopals on the extreme right overshot their objective and came under a staggering cross-fire, losing 200 men and all their officers save one.

Seaforths and 28th and 92nd Punjabis launched their assault a few hours later, and also succeeded in gaining a footing in the Turkish front line. But all attempts to advance farther were brought to a standstill.

The 14th Battery advanced over the open and came into action in close support a few hundred yards behind the line held by the Seaforths. They were met by a terrific fire. By some chance, the teams got away with comparatively few casualties, but it was not long before half the gunners were shot down and two of the guns disabled by direct hits.

All day we hung on to the positions that had been won, the troops suffering severely from the heat and from shortage of water.

The Turks Slip Away

The night was spent in reinforcing the advanced troops preparatory to an attack at dawn. Except for some spasmodic firing, a lull had come over the battlefield. Patrols sent out soon after 3 a.m. on the 22nd reported signs of withdrawal, and when dawn broke it was found that the enemy had slipped away.

The 28th Brigade now took up the pursuit. By midday they were in touch once more with the Turks, who were evidently prepared to strike a last blow for the defence of their railhead.

Brigade headquarters and the supports halted under cover of the ruins of old Istabulat whilst preparations were being made for the attack. At this moment an enemy aeroplane crashed amongst them, shot down by one of our fighters.

From the walls of old Istabulat the whole battlefield was spread out like a panorama. The ground sloped gradually up to a series of undulating mounds and ridges, stretching from the Tigris across the line of the railway. Here one could just pick up the trace of the Turkish trenches, with a few shrapnel from our advance-guard batteries bursting over them like puffs of cotton-wool. Not many miles away was the flat roof of the railway station; in the distance the golden dome of Samarra mosque flashed in the sun.

The 28th Brigade now halted while the artillery registered the Turkish trenches, and the 19th and 21st Brigades

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came up in support. Cassell's Cavalry Brigade took up a position on the desert flank ready to support the attack, and some batteries lent by the III Corps came into action on the left bank of the Tigris to enfilade the trenches by the river.

At 4 p.m. the attack was launched, covered by an artillery bombardment. The Leicesters were on the right, their flank resting on the river, with the 51st Sikhs in support. The 56th Rifles prolonged the line on the left, with their flank on the railway.

"Inspiring" Bayonet-work

The Leicesters swept forward at a tremendous pace. Within half-an-hour they had reached the foot of the ridges, and as the guns lifted, they went in with the bayonet. An officer who was present described it as the most inspiring, whole-hearted charge he had ever seen. Evidently the Turks thought so too, for they did not wait for the steel.

The sight of their enemy in flight was too much for the "Tigers." Throwing caution to the winds, they pressed on in pursuit. Soon they saw flashes through the dust, and realised that they were on top of the Turkish guns. Exhausted, breathless, and parched with thirst, the leading company swept on over a low ridge and almost fell into the depression beyond, where seven guns were in action, served by some 60 Turks.

The Leicester Captain was too hoarse even to call on the Turkish gunners to surrender. His revolver was empty and he had only six men with him. A Turkish Major saved the situation by coming forward and ceremoniously handing a sword, hilt first, to his captor.

The prisoners were hastily sent to the rear, and the handful of Leicesters set about consolidating their position. They were far in advance of their supports, and the ground behind them was swept by gun and rifle fire, shrapnel and high explosive.

Realising the weakness of the British position, the Turkish commander now threw in his reserve, consisting of some 3,000 men. The solid waves of the counter-attack came straight at the nullah where the guns lay. The Leicesters could not hope to hold them, and there was no means of getting away the guns; so, disabling them as best they could, they fell back fighting.

At one moment it looked as though the flank of the brigade would be rolled up, but the 56th Rifles and two companies of the 53rd Sikhs advanced to meet the enemy in the open, supported by the fire of the 136th Machine Gun Company. A terrific fight ensued but, in the end, the enemy were held.

Photo: Keystone.

MUD AND CARS IN LAPUGNOY

Like many another village west of Béthune, Lapugnoy gained what celebrity it ever acquired through being a billeting-place within reach of that most popular of all back-area towns. To-day the pilgrim revisiting the hamlet finds, in addition to the self-same cottages as once formed his temporary home, a British cemetery containing many graves, the majority of them from the Battle of Arras. In all, 961 United Kingdom, 349 Canadian, 7 Australian, 2 South African, 2 Portuguese, 1 Chinese, and 2 German dead here lie buried.

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32nd Lancers' Charge

Meanwhile, Cassell's cavalry had been working forward on the Turkish flank, to the west of the railway. They drove in the enemy's advanced troops, but, as the day wore on, the resistance gradually stiffened, and they came under long-range shell-fire.

Seeing the 56th Rifles on their right hard-pressed by the Turkish counter-attack, the cavalry made a gallant effort to take the pressure off their comrades. Under cover of an artillery bombardment, a squadron of the 32nd Lancers made a mounted charge on the trenches in its front, supported by four armoured cars.

The Lancers were met by a heavy fire, but reached the trench, and the Turks began to surrender. The armoured cars had been unable to follow up the charge, so the Turks rallied and brought a machine gun into action. The cavalry suffered very heavy casualties, including all their British officers.

Nevertheless, this gallant charge was not without its effect. Apart from the splendid spirit that it showed, it brought help to our infantry when it was most needed, and the threat to his flank undoubtedly influenced the Turkish commander in his decision to retire that night.

As dusk was falling the 21st Brigade advanced in long lines to consolidate the position that had been won. During the night the Turks fired off all the ammunition they were unable to carry away, and in the morning they were gone.

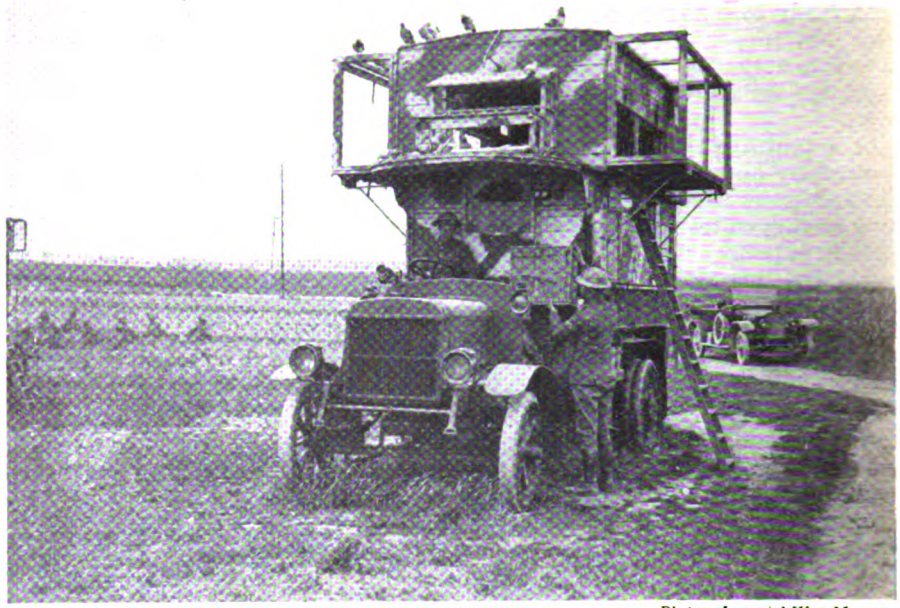

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TRAVELLING AVIARY

Most people will recognise the familiar form of an L.G.O.C. bus underlying the camouflage and superstructure of this mobile pigeon-cote. Note also the four-compartment wicker basket for carrying the birds up the line. Carrier pigeons are of immense value for long-distance messages, since they can fly through gas-clouds, and represent, so to speak, a minimum-size target to the enemy. This photograph was taken at Pernes, June 26th, 1918.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SERVICE KENNELS

Messenger-dog service kennels at G.H.Q. A eulogy of the canine ally in warfare has already been made in an earlier caption; here it may be added that the dog "runner" was at his most useful when and where hostile fire was most heavy, since his rapidity and small size, compared with those of an orderly, greatly lessened his vulnerability. Almost the only disadvantage which he possessed was that it took—understandably enough—rather long to train him while he was still a "recruit."

Next morning the 7th Division entered Samarra, capturing 16 engines and some 250 trucks, besides the whole of the Turkish wounded and much other material. The enemy had been too hustled to put the rolling stock effectually out of action, and in a few days trains were running again between Baghdad and the railhead.

On the afternoon of the 23rd the cavalry came up with the Turkish rear guard some five miles beyond Samarra, forcing it to withdraw and leave some prisoners in our hands. The remains of the Turkish *XVIII Corps* now retired to Tekrit, and Samarra became the advance summer quarters of our I Corps.

The hot weather was already upon us; the temperature rose to 119 degrees in the shade. But the troops could now settle down to as much rest as the heat, dust, and flies permitted, free for the moment of any interference by the enemy.

On the Adhaim

Whilst the batteries lent by the III Corps on the left bank of the Tigris were pouring their fire into the Turkish counter-attack which threatened to engulf the Leicesters and 56th Rifles in

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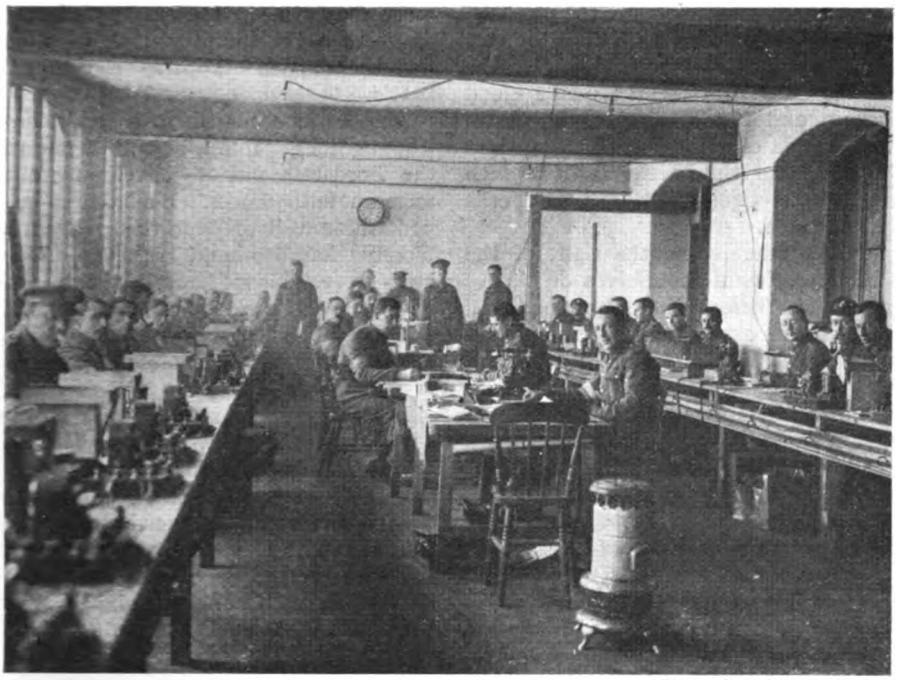

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HARD AT IT

A photograph taken in the signal office of the Fourth Army. The requirements of a good military signalling-system are dependability, accuracy, speed, simplicity, and secrecy; and of all these qualities the last-named proved, during the Great War, undoubtedly the hardest to come by. Allusion has elsewhere been made to the danger of telephone conversations being heard by the enemy owing to insufficient insulation; and many devices were in due course adopted to cope with this. (*See below.*)

front of Istabulat, a mounted messenger arrived to recall them. An aeroplane reconnaissance had spotted the Turkish *XIII Corps* advancing down the Adhaim in a last desperate effort to avert the capture of Samarra.

On the night of the 23rd, General Marshall marched up the Adhaim with the 38th and 35th Brigades to meet this new threat. Nearing the end of a long night march, in the chill which comes with the hour before dawn, the 38th Brigade suddenly saw lights ahead of them. Taking these to be the fires of a casual Arab encampment, they pressed on. A few minutes later, in the light of the false dawn, they saw Turks silhouetted against the sky, busily engaged in digging trenches.

The surprise was mutual, and the battle broke out with startling suddenness. The King's Own and Loyals shook out into line from column-of-route, and at once attacked due east, straight into the rays of the rising sun. Within 600 yards of the Turkish line they were held up by rifle and machine-gun fire. The 55th Brigade, R.F.A., came into action 1,000 yards behind them to keep down the enemy fire.

Here a halt was called whilst the 35th Brigade made a turning movement round the Turkish right flank. When the two brigades advanced again, the Turks, who subsequently turned out to be the leading division of the *XIII Corps*, retired across the Adhaim, heavily shelled by our guns.

Heat-stroke Among the Young

This action took place on April 24th, the day after General Cobbe had entered Samarra. The weather was now extremely hot, and the troops were suffering from their exertions. A number of cases of heat-stroke had occurred amongst the young soldiers of the 13th Division, who were still clad in the khaki serge in which they had marched and fought all the winter.

But General Maude very wisely refused to call a halt whilst the Turkish *XIII Corps* remained within striking distance of our left flank. The enemy had been shaken by his recent reverses, and one more blow struck at once would knock him out and ensure the boon of a more-or-less peaceful hot weather.

General Marshall accordingly set about concentrating the III Corps to strike a decisive blow. The cavalry remained in touch with the Turks, who retired slowly on a strong position at the village of Band-i-Adhaim, where the river of that name emerges from the Jabal Hamrin hills. The infantry followed by easy marches. By April 26th the two forces were once more face to face.

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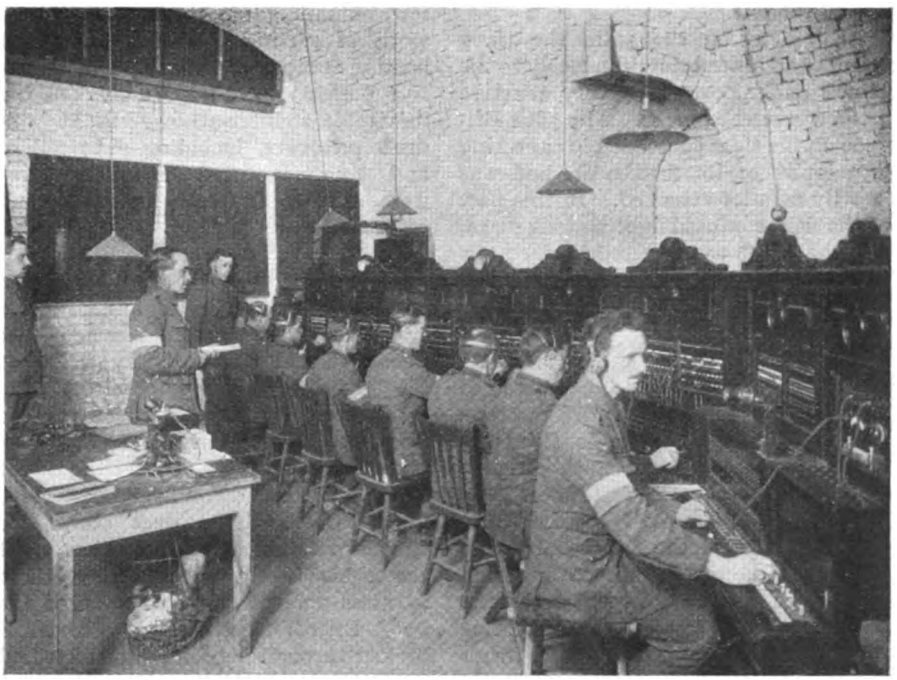

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G.H.Q. SIGNALS

The commonest device to check incautious use of the telephone was policing by listening-sets, the organisation being known as "I.T." Science, however, was also called to the rescue: the "earths" of the circuits were carried back as much as 1,500 yards, twisted cables were used, and vibrating "buzzers" to jam speech were introduced, while protective devices were also devised for telegraphic communication. One corps, at least, purposely kept a faulty telephone-line to supply the enemy with false news. The above picture was taken at Montreuil, September, 1918.

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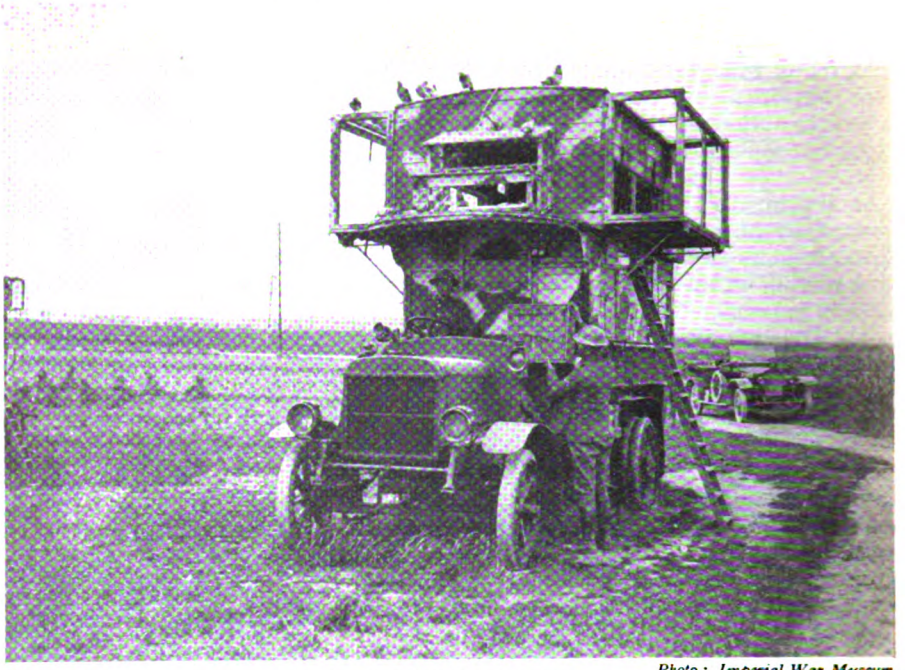

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wandered far and wide, between high, cliff-like banks in a bed which varies in width between 2,000 and 3,500 yards.

On the 27th our advanced troops succeeded in seizing a large island in the middle of the river-bed. About 2,000 yards upstream of the island the cliffs of the right bank jut out into the bed of the river, forming a lofty, irregular mound in the shape of a boot. Here the Turks had established the centre of their line.

On their right a line of trenches ran back some 4,000 yards until they rested on a hill. The Turkish left extended across the river-bed, climbed the cliffs in a series of formidable machine-gun emplacements and redoubts, and, circling in front of Band-i-Adhaim village, swept round to the north. The whole position covered some seven or eight miles of front, and dominated the level plain over which an attacker must advance.

The Attack Launched

April 27th, 28th, and 29th were spent in making preparations for the attack. At nightfall on the 29th, the 38th Brigade marched out and took up a position threatening the Turkish left. It was soon in touch with enemy patrols, which fell back fighting.

General Marshall now brought up the 40th Brigade in the centre, ready to deliver the decisive stroke at dawn. The 35th Brigade prolonged the British line to the left.

At 5 a.m. on the 30th, the three brigades advanced simultaneously to the attack under cover of a very effective artillery bombardment. The 38th Brigade on the right succeeded in capturing a redoubt in its first rush, but was heavily counter-attacked. In this part of the field confused fighting took place, and the line swayed to and fro for some time, finally coming to a standstill when both sides began to dig in with their entrenching tools.

The 35th Brigade on the left succeeded in getting within 600 yards of the trenches on "the Boot," but was held up there by a terrific rifle and machine-gun fire. The 40th Brigade in the centre was more fortunate. The leading battalions—4th South Wales Borderers and 8th Cheshires—advanced rapidly, obtaining good cover from the smoke and dust thrown up by the barrage. They carried the first line without a check, and soon found themselves in the second line, with the Turks retreating in front of them.

Lure of the Guns

Strict orders had been issued that the attackers were to halt on the Turkish second line and consolidate the position. But two-thirds of the Cheshire officers had fallen in the advance, including the colonel and adjutant, the men's blood was up, and there was no holding them. The village of Band-i-Adhaim lay just beyond, and they went into it with bomb and bayonet, driving the Turks before them.

The Borderers, on the right of the Cheshires, found themselves on top of the Turks before the latter had had time to recover from the bombardment. Our men met with little opposition, and took a number of prisoners. Overshooting the second line in the confusion, they caught sight of the Cheshires still advancing, and pressed on after them.

Just beyond the village, Cheshires and Borderers saw the flash of guns. The enemy batteries lay in front of them. They could no more resist the lure of the Turkish guns than could the Leicesters at Istabulat, the week before. One final rush carried them into the midst of two four-gun batteries. The gunners put up their hands and surrendered.

The remnants of the two battalions now stood around the captured guns, completely winded by the long charge. They were a good 3,000 yards ahead of their supports, they had run out the last of their telephone line a mile back, and were short of ammunition. The few remaining officers set about the work of sorting out their men and hastily occupying some kind of defensive position before the arrival of the inevitable counter-attack. Eight hundred prisoners, including a brigadier, and four captured machine guns, were sent to the rear under a small escort.

Dust Helps the Turks

At this moment a terrific dust-storm swept over the ground where the Cheshires and Borderers lay, reducing the visibility to a few yards. The Turkish commander was quick to seize his opportunity. His reserve had been massed that morning to meet the threat of the 38th Brigade on his flank. Now, under cover of the dust storm, he transferred three fresh battalions right across his front, and launched them in mass against the remnants of the two British battalions which had broken through his centre and captured the guns.

Only those who have seen one of these desert typhoons blotting out the landscape hour after hour can realise their blinding intensity. But for the storm, our artillery would have blown the masses of the attackers to pieces; as it was, the infantry had to shift for themselves. It was a soldiers' battle.

The Turks came on in a solid, continuous line—"like a horn," as one of the Borderers put it—enveloping our men on both flanks. Behind the impenetrable veil of dust there raged a bloody hand-to-hand struggle. Our men were driven back through the village by sheer weight of numbers. All but one of the guns were recaptured, and half the prisoners bolted in the confusion.

Fortunately, as soon as the storm came on, General Lewin had sent up his two remaining battalions—5th Wilts and 8th Royal Welch Fusiliers—to occupy the captured trenches and act as supports. This timely action saved the brigade from disaster. As the Turks emerged from the village they were met by a devastating fire, which forced them to take cover.

The Turks Quit

Both sides were now content to hold on to the positions that they had won, until the storm had blown itself out.

Late in the afternoon the wind abated, enabling our gunners to size up the situation. They poured a devastating fire into the village, under cover of which the gallant remnants of the 40th Brigade were able once more to work forward. The 38th Brigade on the right were also able to make progress.

The 35th Brigade on the left had by now reached the foot of "the Boot," and at dusk the Gurkha bombers started to scale the cliffs under cover of a short bombardment. Some confused fighting followed, but by midnight the Turks were retiring all along the line.

In the morning the cavalry set off in pursuit, leaving the remainder of General Marshall's men to reorganise and clear the battlefield.

The enemy were now in full flight into the mountain fastnesses of the Jabal Hamrin, where our horsemen could not follow. After the terrific punishment it had received, the Turkish *XIII Corps* had ceased for the time being to exist as a fighting force. On the next day Ali Isan Bey's pickets watched from a respectful distance whilst our column packed up its traps and departed down the valley of the Adhaim to take up summer quarters.

Two days later our aeroplanes, flying low, bombed and machine-gunned the Turkish columns as they trudged wearily along the narrow mountain roads.

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CHAPTER LXII

ART IN THE GREAT WAR

Camouflage is no new thing. Many birds and beasts have from the beginning of time been endowed by Nature with markings designed to render them difficult to locate amid their customary surroundings. The application of camouflage to ships, tanks, and guns was brought to a fine art during the Great War, and in the following chapter Mr. Frank Rutter describes the work of artists during that period, and in particular their achievements in the field of protective colouring.

MANY people used to think—and, for that matter many people still think to-day—that all artists are dreamy, romantic, visionary creatures, well enough in their way perhaps, but hopelessly unpractical and of no real use in the workaday world. If anything could kill this entirely erroneous idea, it should have been the experience of the Great War; but since memories are short, and the error appears barely to have been scotched for a time, it may be of interest to recall in this chapter some of the many ways in which professional artists, by very reason of their special gifts and training, were able to make contributions of high value to increase the efficiency of the Empire's fighting forces on Land, on Sea, and in the Air.

General Observations

It is not proposed here to dwell on the achievements in the field, of painters and sculptors, whether in their own particular Territorial regiment, the Artists' Rifles, or the many other units in which artists, like other civilians, did their duty; but certain general observations may be permissible.

In the first place, every artist is a trained observer. His profession has taught him to use his eyes more keenly and continuously than the average man has opportunity or inclination to do. Consequently the artist-soldier was soon found to be particularly valuable for reconnaissance and observation. It would be easy to name offhand a number of artists who have since won fame who during the War served with distinction as observers with the R.A. and with the R.F.C.

Again, the artist's ability to draw accurately and rapidly was soon found to be of great utility for various military purposes. For example, landscape-painters, whether holding commissions or in the ranks, were obviously the men for the work when panoramic views of positions were wanted for artillery and range-finding purposes. Many of these views have been preserved in the Imperial War Museum, and several possess high artistic merit as well as historical interest. Though primarily useful by reason of its accuracy and clear delineation of the features of the landscape, there is exquisite delicacy in an annotated panorama showing "The Doiran Lake, Salonica Front, December 1916" by a gifted young artist Gerard Chowne (Captain, 9th East Lancs. Regiment), who died of wounds in Macedonia in the following year.

Portrait-painters also helped in this work, notably Mr. W. G. de Glehn, R.A., who served as a captain in the Royal Garrison Artillery. The Imperial War Museum has several of the views he made from observation posts on the Austrian-Italian Front, one of them containing a note by the artist to the effect that the Austrian front-line trenches were completely hidden by the foothills (in possession of the Italians) until they appeared to the right of the drawing as a zigzag line running obliquely across the low hills.

Drawing panoramas, however, was only one job of many for which artists were peculiarly well qualified. Many of them discovered, soon after their enlistment, that they were picked out as the best available material for mapping instructors. Others were employed to make enlarged drawings of enemy positions from photographs taken from aeroplanes.

The Art of Camouflage

But by far the most important contribution made by artists towards the winning of the Great War was their brilliant and successful participation in military and naval camouflage. Of the importance of camouflage, whether for defence or to screen a contemplated advance, it is unnecessary to speak; but never in any war before 1914 had it been so vital to protect an army from observation from *above*. In this respect the use of aeroplanes revolutionised warfare.

No disrespect to the Royal Engineers—the "brains of the Army"—is intended when it is said that had the officers of the Regular Army been left to themselves their camouflage would prob-

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"HEAVY ARTILLERY"

A picture by Lieut. Colin U. Gill, R.E., which has for subject a battery of 9·2-inch howitzers. The guns are camouflaged, and green netting (top left corner) helps to conceal them. On the left also is a wayside Calvary overturned by shell fire, while on the right two infantrymen are resting on their way back from the line.

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ably have been a failure, and even an index to the enemy. Fortunately, from its inception, the Royal Engineers had the support and assistance of distinguished and experienced artists in tackling the problems of camouflage, which was almost wholly organised and carried out by soldier-artists.

But it must be recognised that though the word "camouflage" came into use in the British Army during the Great War, the art was not unknown to the Engineers, and to some extent to the Artillery. It was consistently applied in coast fortification—witness the painting of heavy guns in coast batteries and the "dice-board" chequered pattern of the Spit forts.

No one man gave more valuable assistance to camouflage in its infancy than the distinguished Academician Mr. Solomon J. Solomon, R.A., who was given a commission as colonel in the Royal Engineers. Like most painters of genuine ability, Solomon had an inventive and creative mind, and to him belongs the credit of designing and erecting the first British camouflage tree for observation purposes.

The Sham Tree

A tree in a prominent position in the front line was selected as a model, and careful drawings of it were made. From these a steel-cored replica was built behind the lines. Under cover of darkness, the original tree was cut down and the dummy, which was provided with an interior ladder and an observation loop-hole, was substituted for it. Access to this dummy was gained from below. A number of such trees were erected on the Western Front and proved to be extremely useful. A picture in the Imperial War Museum shows "The Erection of the first Observation Post Tree," on the embankment of the Yser Canal, north of Bridge 4, and among the figures on the extreme right are those of Colonel Solomon and his assistant Lieut. Walter Russell, R.E., now Sir Walter Russell, R.A., Keeper of the Royal Academy.

This dummy tree was but one of Colonel Solomon's inventions for deceiving the enemy, that deception, of course, being the whole aim of camouflage. The masking of batteries, whether by lateral netting, painted awnings overhead, or patch-work painting on the guns themselves, were other details of camouflage on which soldier-artists were employed. The first stage of this art, in which Colonel Solomon took such a great and leading part, was based on the protective colouring of

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A DUMMY TREE

This illustration portrays photographically such a tree as the artist has depicted, in the study reproduced on the opposite page, during the process of erection. Made of steel and canvas, its hollow interior furnished with a ladder and an observation loophole, the false tree would be modelled upon some genuine trunk standing in a convenient situation near the front line. The original would then, under cover of darkness, be cut down, and the dummy substituted. Access was afterwards gained from below, by means of a trench. The "tree" shown here stood near Souchez, and the photograph is dated May 15th, 1918.

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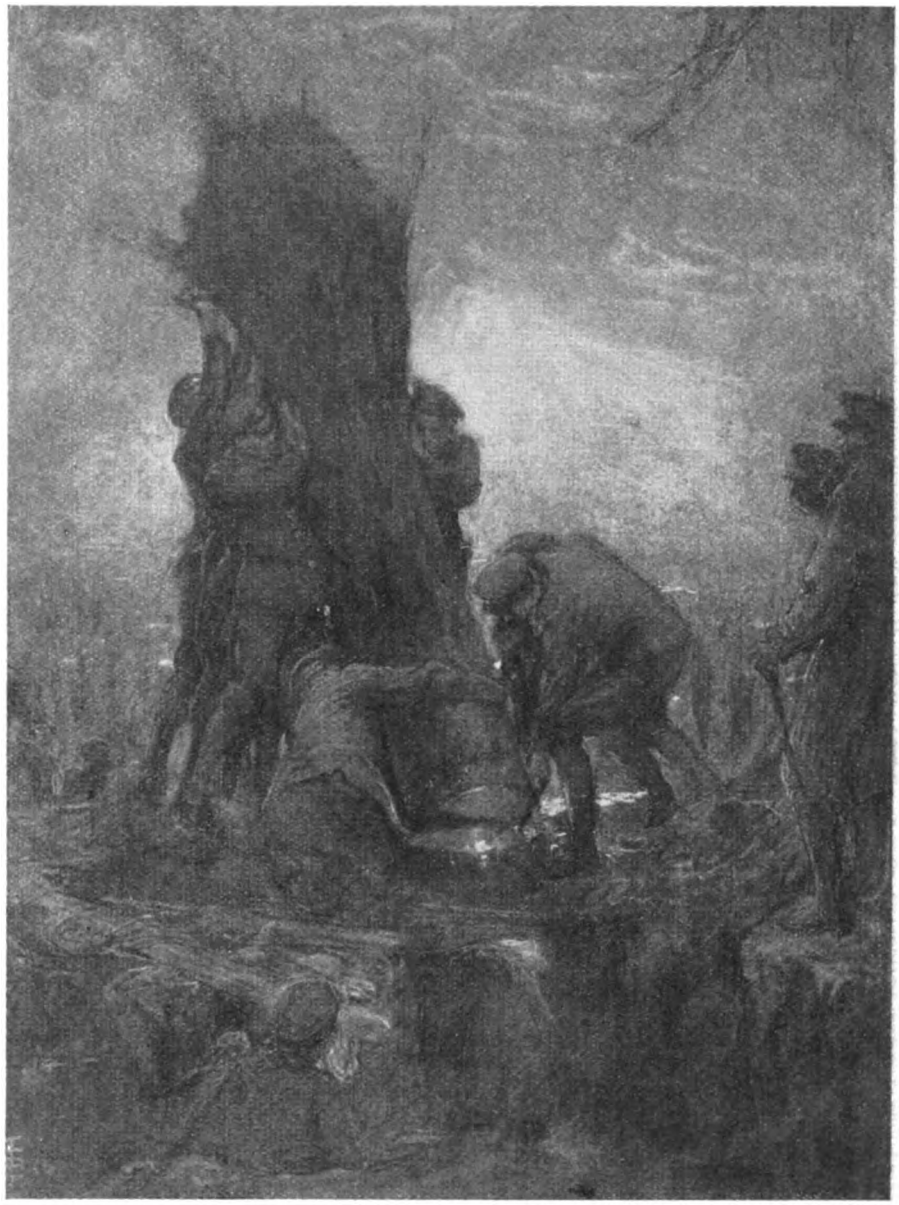
birds, animals, and insects. The easiest way to conceal the presence of a form is to break it up into strange shapes, and since the successful accomplishment of this depends very largely on design and texture, as well as colour, it is easy to see how the professional painter came to this work with a special knowledge of which the engineer had little or none. Colonel Solomon was also employed in the camouflage of the original tanks.

Some idea of the complications of artillery camouflage is given by Mr. Colin Gill's picture "Heavy Artillery." This painting has as its subject a battery of 9·2-inch howitzers, the gun familiarly known to the troops as "Mother." Their patchwork camouflage made them unrecognisable to hostile aircraft, and the green netting helped to conceal the emplacements. On the right of the picture are two infantrymen resting by the gun-pit on their way back from the line, and on the left is a wayside Calvary broken and overturned by a shell explosion. The forward observing officer and his signal sergeant, leaving the battery for the observation post in the front trenches and a ruined village in the background, form part of the decorative scheme. The painter served during the War as a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.

A New Development

In the course of time, war experience revealed that there were defects in the first system of camouflage based on the protective colouring of animals. That system worked well enough so long as there were only human eyes to consider, but observations were conducted not only by human eyes, but also by means of photography. It was another artist, the young portrait-painter Mr. Alan Beeton, who was the pioneer of the second stage in the development of camouflage. This artist discovered that while you can deceive the human eye with colour, the camera, which takes no notice of colour, can be deceived only by falsities of tone—quite a different thing. To Mr. Beeton was due the highly subtle and scientific development of camouflage based on tonal subtleties, on how things appear to the camera rather than how they look to the human eye, which was practised in the last year of the War.

Netting was used not only to hide batteries, but also to conceal the movement of troops along roads under enemy observation. Pictures showing stretches of these screens, by Sir William Orpen, Captain E. Handley-Read, and other artists, will be found in the I.W.M., where there is also a painting by Mrs. Alan Beeton showing Miss Penrose, Queen Mary's W.A.A.C. Administrator, superintending French work-people making screens of netting cover with strips of canvas at Aire.



From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"ERECTING THE FIRST OBSERVATION POST TREE"

To Colonel Solomon J. Solomon, of the Royal Engineers, belongs the credit of designing and erecting the first British camouflage tree for observation purposes. The experiment was carried out after the manner described in the preceding caption, and the site chosen was a point on the embankment of the Yser Canal, north of Bridge 4. In this vivid study, which is the work of Colonel Solomon himself, the inventor-artist is seen standing on the right with Lieut. Walter Russell, R.E.—to-day better known as Sir Walter Russell, R.A.

Ingenuity in the matter of deceiving the enemy was not limited to the disguising of guns, of objects, positions and emplacements. The greatest dexterity was displayed in camouflaging the human body itself. To the inexperienced, one of the most "difficult" pictures in the I.W.M. is the "Impression of a Camouflaged Sniper" by Private Eric Kennington (13th London Regiment). This shows us a carefully disguised sniper, his head covered with foliage and his boots—so liable to be conspicuous—carefully concealed in a sand-bag. No wonder it is difficult to understand, at first, what this picture represents.

Dazzle Ships

Camouflage in the Navy was rather a different matter, the problem for the Senior Service being not so much how to conceal, as how to mislead, and par-

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From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

MANUFACTURE OF CAMOUFLAGE

Apart from the need for posters, camouflage was the one feature of the War in which the fine arts could claim to be of direct practical service to the military. In this painting by Mrs. Alan Beeton, French girl-labour is seen at the task of making screens to camouflage roads, gun-emplacements, etc., from netting covered with strips of canvas. Superintending the work is Miss Penrose, M.M., the administrator of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps, under whose auspices the work was carried on. The scene of the painting is the small town of Aire, 19 km. south-west of Hazebrouck.

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From GENTELLES to BEAUCOURT
Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

DISTURBANCE OF THE RUSTIC SCENE

The village of Gentelles, of which this is a war-time photograph, lies rather less than 5 km. south-west of Villers-Bretonneux, on the road from there to Boves. At the end of the German thrust against Amiens in March–April, 1918, our line here ran approximately due north-and-south, just east of Villers-Bretonneux. On April 24th, a violent attack was launched against our positions between the Somme and the Avre, British and German tanks coming into contact for the first time. Eventually Villers-Bretonneux was captured, and our line broken south-east of it, but Gentelles was never reached by the enemy.

Photo: Keystone

A RURAL TABLEAU OF GREAT CHARM

At 10 p.m. on the night of April 24th, 1918, a counter-attack was launched against Villers-Bretonneux by a brigade of the 18th Division, and the 13th and 15th Brigades of the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions. By daybreak on the 25th the village had been almost surrounded, and during the morning two battalions of the 8th Division fought their way resolutely through the streets. That afternoon found the place, thanks to great courage and brilliant staff-work, completely in our possession again. The relevance of this narrative to our pictures of Gentelles is that some of the troops concerned in the attack sallied to it from the latter village.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

DEBRIS IN DOMART

Domart-sur-la-Luce lies 4 km. south-west of Gentelles, on the long, straight road from Amiens to Roye and Noyon. The Luce is a small tributary of the Avre, which in turn enters the Somme just east of Amiens. It was at Hangard, a bare 3 km. east of Domart, that in 1918 the British forces linked up with the French. Hangard was for a brief while (April, 1918) in German hands, but Domart never fell, its salvation being partly due to a successful attack made from it on April 1st, 1918, by the 2nd Cavalry Division.

Photo: Keystone

NEW HÔTEL DE VILLE, DOMART

During the final Allied advance of summer, 1918, Domart and Hangard came within the Canadian sphere of operations. Hangard, after the 18th Division had been heavily engaged there, was cleared of the enemy on August 8th by the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, and Domart fell on the same day to the 43rd Canadian Battalion. The war-time view reproduced above was taken just after the recapture, both it and the War picture on p. 1009 being Canadian official photographs. There is one War cemetery (mainly Overseas) at Domart, and two, also containing many Empire graves, are to be found at Hangard.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

CAYEUX-EN-SANTERRE

Cayeux is also on the Luce, astride the road from Amiens to Rosières, which leaves the Amiens–Roye route just south of Domart. 8 km. separate Cayeux from Domart, and the same distance lies between it and Rosières. A severe attack developed against the Allied positions hereabouts at 1 p.m. on March 28th, 1918, when Guillaucourt was captured, the line to the south, between Caix and Le Quesnel, penetrated, and Cayeux itself (where there were British troops, although the sector was mainly in French hands), likewise taken.

Photo: Keystone

IN SOMNOLENT CAYEUX

The recapture of Cayeux toward the end of the War was once again the work of the Canadian Corps. The four Canadian divisions—3rd, 1st, and 2nd, from south to north, with the 4th in close support—attacked between the Amiens–St. Quentin and Amiens–Roye roads on August 8th, 1918, and Cayeux-en-Santerre was among the villages which they took in their stride. British cavalry and light tanks followed up to exploit the gains, and our War picture shows a waggon-convoy in the village on August 9th. There is now one British cemetery here, containing 215 graves.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

HARNESS

British cavalry passing through Beaucourt-en-Santerre to attack Le Quesnel, August 9th, 1918. The former village lies just north of the Amiens–Roye route, upon the road from Rosières to Moreuil; a lane leads direct to Cayeux. Beaucourt was lost in the enemy push of April, 1918, and remained in German hands until the turning of the tide four months later. It was then captured, on August 8th, in gallant style by the 3rd Cavalry Division, covered by the 4th Canadian Division, the cavalrymen dismounting in the later stages of the assault to clear out machine-gun nests.

Photo: Keystone

EMPTINESS

Before nightfall on August 9th the enemy had begun to blow up his ammunition-dumps " in all directions "—thus one account. Transport and artillery limbers began to stream eastward towards the Somme, and our R.A.F. (it had acquired this title on April 1st, 1918) harried the fugitives fiercely. Already more than 13,000 prisoners and between 300 and 400 guns had been taken, and this number was shortly to be much increased. . . . Nowadays Beaucourt British Cemetery contains 77 Canadian and 7 United Kingdom dead.

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From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

CAMOUFLAGE IN SERVICE

Another rendering of a concealed emplacement for a 9·2-inch howitzer, entirely different in treatment from the painting reproduced on page 1021. The above is the work of Adrian Hill, and was sketched on the Béthune front in June, 1918.

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

CAMOUFLAGED TANKS

"Camouflaged Tanks, Berles-au-Bois," is the full title of this picture by John S. Sargent, R.A. The original is a very fine water-colour, to which a half-tone reproduction can do but scant justice. Painted covers, in addition to the trees, conceal the tanks.

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From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"THE GREAT CAMOUFLAGE, COMBLES"

A study by Sir William Orpen, R.A., who was a major at the time of the picture's execution. Only the remnants of the Great Camouflage are depicted, enemy shelling having caused many gaps. Originally the structure consisted of an immense and continuous line of screens erected across the Combles area of the Somme battle-front to conceal the movement of troops. The materials consisted of wooden uprights, supported by guy-ropes, and lengths of cloth attached to netting.

ticularly how to mislead the enemy as to the *direction* in which a ship was heading. Here again a problem which had baffled the experts of the Admiralty was triumphantly solved by an artist, the eminent marine painter Mr. Norman Wilkinson, R.I., who is now President of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-colours.

To Mr. Norman Wilkinson, always a keen yachtsman and during the War a lieutenant-commander in the R.N.V.R., belongs the credit of having originated dazzle-painting, a device for the protection of merchant vessels from submarine attack, which saved the lives of thousands of seamen, and proved so successful that it was adopted by all our allies.

Mr. Wilkinson's own picture in the I.W.M., "A Convoy of Dazzled Ships in the Channel," shows the diagonal-striped patterns with which these vessels were painted with a view to upsetting the calculation of an attacking submarine as to the actual course steered. "Which way are they going?" The difficulty of answering this question correctly from this picture is a proof of the success of the system.

In the same museum a painting of "Herculaneum Dock, Liverpool," by Mr. L. Campbell Taylor, R.A. (who was also a lieutenant in the R.N.V.R.), shows us two ships with two types of camouflage design. The nearer ship exemplifies an early style of dazzle-painting: the farther ship has a striped design of a later method that was found to be more effective, and this, towards the end of the War, superseded all other designs.

Yet another type of dazzle design is seen in Mr. Charles Pears' picture of a camouflaged battleship, "Dazzled: H.M.S. *Ramillies* in a gale of wind"; though here the point of view taken by the artist is rather too close to the ship for the spectator to be misled as to its direction. Mr. Pears served as a major in the Royal Marines.

It is impossible to give the names of all the artists who took part in dazzle-painting for the Navy, but it may at least be said that they included painters of all Schools, from Royal Academicians to Surrealists.

Luring the Recruit

The few instances already given may serve to indicate the way in which artists rose to the special needs of the time and showed both practical adaptability and initiative in tackling difficult jobs for which they happened to be particularly well qualified. We may now turn from

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such abnormal pursuits as camouflage, to more normal artistic activities which were also found to be useful in war-time.

The first recognition of the artist's value to the State was made at the very beginning of the War, in connection with the recruiting campaign of 1914–15. Close on a hundred posters were commissioned from various artists by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, and 2,500,000 copies of these were distributed throughout Great Britain.

No responsible critic would claim that all these posters were great works of art, but at least they were striking and efficient, and proved the power of the artist to drive home an idea with a minimum of verbiage. A good example of this, which some readers may remember, was a silhouette poster showing two infantrymen with fixed bayonets charging a hill, and bearing no other words but these : " Don't stand looking at this. Go and Help ! "

Nevertheless, several posters did possess high artistic value, notably the " Remember Belgium " by Mr. Frank Brangwyn, R.A., and Mr. Spencer Pryse's " The Only Road for an Englishman," which by its noble conception and dignified treatment was perhaps the finest of all the recruiting posters.

Propaganda

Another way in which artists gave material assistance to the national effort was by means of War cartoons in newspapers and periodicals. Active propaganda on the part of the Allies became more and more necessary as the War continued, and few forms of propaganda are more telling and have a more immediate appeal than the cartoon and caricature.

In this activity the *Punch* artists, of course, were well to the fore, and Mr. Bernard Partridge produced a classic which history will never allow to be forgotten, in his cartoon (" Unconquerable ") of Albert, King of the Belgians, proudly replying to the Kaiser's " So, you see, you've lost everything " with " Not my soul." (See page 21.)

Excellent work was also done by L. Raven Hill, Edmund J. Sullivan, and many others. The Australian artist Will Dyson deservedly made a great reputation by the brilliance and biting satire of the cartoons which he contributed first to the *Daily Herald* and other Labour publications. Mr. Brangwyn in 1917 decared that Will Dyson was an " international asset," and the extent to which Dyson's cartoons were reproduced abroad proved the sensation they created in America, Spain, and other neutral countries.

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

" NEAR NEUVE CHAPELLE "

This drawing portrays a road under enemy observation in the vicinity of Neuve Chapelle, and is the work of Captain E. Handley-Read, of the Machine Gun Corps. The sackcloth screens for hiding troop-movements are much in evidence, and incidentally the three notice-boards visible are worded in three different tongues. The road is the Rue du Bois, which ran south-west from the Estaires—La Bassée highway (Port Arthur being at the point of junction), and during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle was in the territory of the Garwhal and Bareilly Brigades of the Meerut (Indian) Division.

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By the spring of 1915 the War was absorbing the activities of all the best black-and-white artists in the United Kingdom; and it brought to light one hitherto unknown humorous artist of unique distinction and originality.

Bruce Bairnsfather

It was on March 31st, 1915, that *The Bystander* published the first cartoon by Captain Bruce Bairnsfather. His very first effort—"Where did that one go to?"—was an immediate success, enthusiastically received everywhere, and especially appreciated by the men in the trenches. This was followed by a long series of amusing drawings which soon became first favourites with both soldiers and civilians.

The artist's intimate knowledge of life at the front, his whimsical appreciation of the British "Tommy's" peculiar sense of humour even in the midst of tragedy, carried Captain Bairnsfather to a height of popularity that no other cartoonist could approach. His many drawings are as characteristic a record of the Great War as those by Cruikshank are of the age of Dickens.

Curiously enough, the one thing in which the artists seemed to fail, at first, was in producing memorable pictures of the War. The old way of painting battle pictures in terms of pageantry, pomp, and costume, not only rang untrue under modern conditions, but was distasteful to the spectators, and especially to all who had had first-hand experience of modern warfare.

The Royal Academy of 1915 was very disappointing in the paucity and poor quality of its War pictures, the chief novelty being Mr. W. L. Wylie's bird's-eye landscape viewed from an aeroplane, "The Fighting Line from Ypres to the Sea." The older artists could paint scenes connected with the War, but they could not rouse much emotion by their interpretations, and the imagination of the public was not caught and fired till a younger generation of painters, with front-line experience, gave more powerful expression in paint to what they themselves had seen and felt.

C. R. W. Nevinson

It was in March, 1915, that Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson—who had been driving a motor-ambulance behind the Belgian front since the autumn of 1914—sent to an exhibition at the Goupil Gallery, London, a picture entitled "Returning to the Trenches." Unconventional in style, partly "cubist" in convention, this picture vividly and irresistibly conveyed an impression of the onward rush of an advancing army, and presented this march, not so much as the affair of a group of individual men, but rather as the creaking progress of a complicated machine.

That was the first and very remarkable triumph of Nevinson, his driving home an idea of the movement and *mechanism* of modern warfare. Later on, at the Leicester Galleries, he showed a collection of paintings which for the first time presented to civilians the grim truth; and some of

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"A CONVOY OF DAZZLED SHIPS IN THE CHANNEL"

The painter of this picture, Mr. Norman Wilkinson, O.B.E., was also the originator of dazzle-painting, and in this seascape has given us an excellent representation of the results of his own inventive genius. As a lieutenant-commander in the R.N.V.R., he soon found opportunity for turning his skill at marine painting to account; and to-day his fine colour-sketches and other works executed during the Great War form an interesting permanent exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.

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his work was so powerful, so overwhelming in its horror, that stay-at-home civilians were loudly indignant. In the Royal Academy Sir John Lavery showed a picture of a ward in the London Hospital in which wounded soldiers seemed perfectly happy amid flowers and sunlight.

But in "La Patrie" Nevinson showed the misery of wounded men on rows of stretchers in an improvised shelter behind the firing-line. The later War pictures of Nevinson were not so grim as some of his earlier paintings, but they always had conviction and rang true. On the other hand, attempts to envisage the Great War after memories of Napoleonic and Crimean war-pictures merely led to incredible compositions of sword-waving officers and neatly brushed infantrymen who, as a New Zealander once remarked, would be "wiped out by one man with a machine gun."

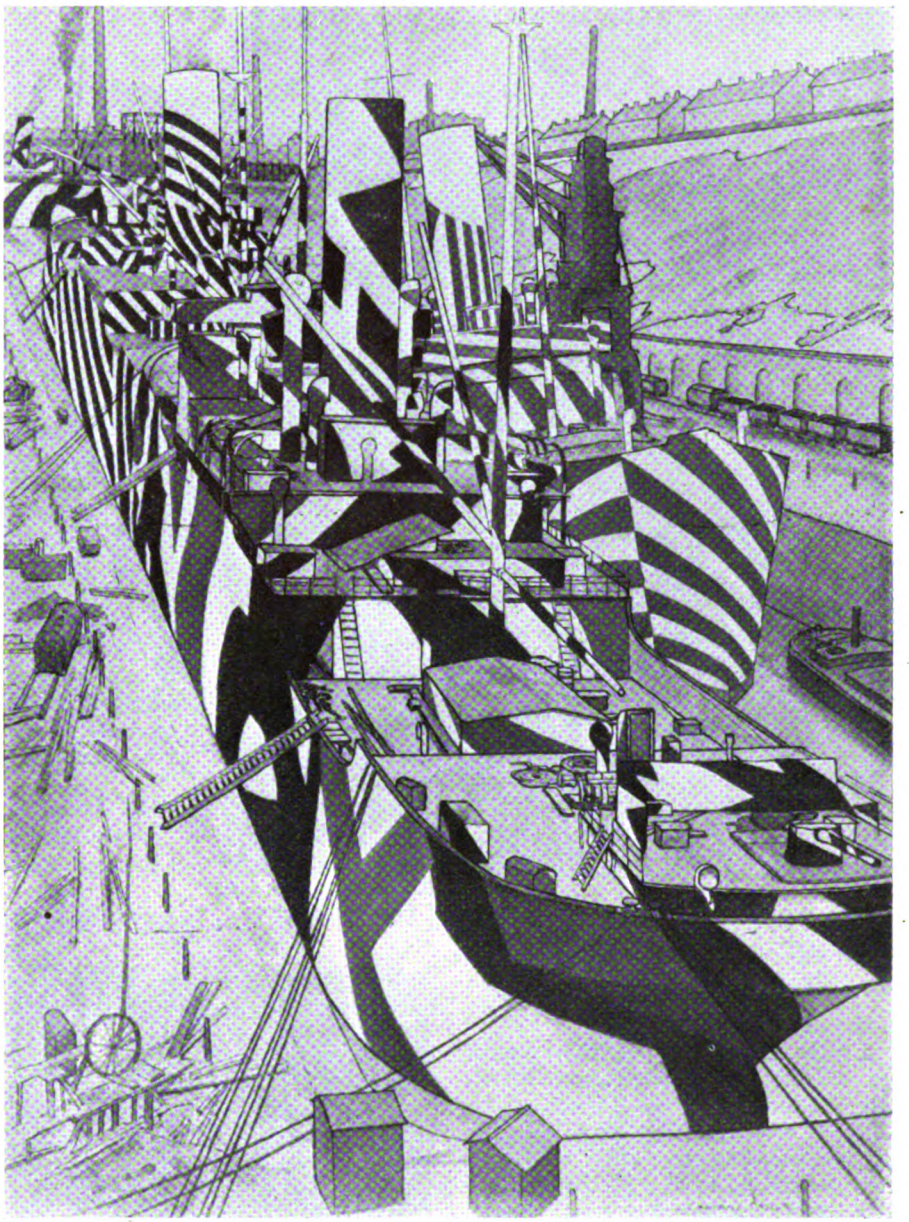
Paul Nash's Bitterness

The next genuinely fresh interpretation in paint of modern war was shown also at the Goupil Gallery, where in 1917 a young private, Paul Nash, exhibited a small collection of water-colours of "The Ypres Salient." These remarkable works gave us a new vision of a new world, for the artist, a sensitive, poetic landscape-painter, was tormented by the appearance of the desolated, war-scarred country. He showed in "Inverness Copse" (see page 6) the shattered remains of a wood, and if there be exaggeration in the appearance of the pitted earth exposed to constant shelling, this exaggeration is part of the strangeness of the look of things to men in an agonising moment of stress.

Similarly, if the barbed wire seems out of all proportion in "Landscape, Year of our Lord 1917," it is no larger than it appears to the soldier who has to advance through it. These landscapes are painted as seen by the mind's eye; and the mind of man ever enlarges that which it has good cause to fear. The essential truth of Paul Nash's war pictures has never been disputed by ex-Service men, who remember not only what they saw but how they felt.

Possibly it was the comparative failure of the older painters to record war scenes in a satisfying manner which led the Government to select a worker in Black-and-White as the first Official Artist. For many years before the War Mr. Muirhead Bone had enjoyed a great reputation as probably the finest draughtsman of his time both of architectural subjects and landscape. Further, Mr. Bone's known ability in extracting memorable designs from demolitions, made him a most appropriate artist to record the spectacle of destruction on the Western Front.

It was in August, 1916, that Mr. Bone received his appointment, and in April, 1917, Mr. James McBey, another scholarly artist and etcher akin in style to Mr. Bone, was appointed Official Artist to the forces in Palestine. The same month Sir William Orpen, R.A., was sent officially to France. But Orpen was primarily a portrait painter, and though he painted some War landscapes, his most valuable works were the superb series of portraits he painted of men of all ranks, so great a collection of which he presented to the nation. Orpen, indeed, was at his best at the Peace Conference, in the two great historic pictures he painted of the statesmen at Versailles. It was only after the Armistice that he was able to express in paint what he thought



From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"HERCULANEUM DOCK, LIVERPOOL"

The wide number of people who are familiar with Mr. L. Campbell Taylor's delicate studies of Victorian interiors, of which reproductions are to be seen in almost every respectable art-shop, will find it hard to recognise his handiwork in this picture of camouflaged vessels. The artist, however, who is now an R.A., served during the War as a lieutenant in the R.N.V.R., and executed a number of studies. Of the ships here seen, the nearest displays an early type of design, while those in the background are painted with the striped pattern which towards the end of the War superseded all other types.

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From the drawing by W. O. Gent.

"I 'AD A REALLY DANGEROUS JOB IN CIVVY LIFE!"

about war in his symbolic picture, "To the Unknown Soldier."

Official Appointments

By the summer of 1917, however, it was tolerably clear that the two artists who had most to say about the War were C. R. W. Nevinson and Paul Nash, and after responsible art-experts had made representations to the proper authorities, both were appointed Official Artists. About the same time Mr. Eric Kennington, the painter of one of the best of the early War pictures, "The Kensingtons at Laventie," also received his appointment as an Official War Artist.

Further artists were appointed during the following year, and the number of them was evidence of the way in which the War led the Government to treat art and artists with more seriousness and consideration than they had ever before received in Great Britain. In addition to those appointed by the Imperial authorities, Official Artists were commissioned to paint pictures by Dominion Governments, and a number of eminent British as well as Canadian artists were employed in painting pictures for the Canadian War Memorials.

By placing on permanent record both views of scenes caused, and also expressions of emotions evoked, by the greatest war the world has ever known, artists rendered to their country an important service which posterity will know how to value and appreciate. While the greatest collection of them is in the Imperial War Museum, there are also many of importance in the Tate Gallery, London, the Manchester Art Gallery, and innumerable other galleries in Great Britain and in the Dominions.

Done from Memory

Mention should also be made of some important War paintings, executed from memory by artists who had taken part in the campaigns, after peace had been restored to the world. The most notable of these post-war achievements is the Wayside Chapel at Burghclere, near Newbury, with mural paintings by Mr. Stanley Spencer.

Relying on memories of his experiences in the Macedonian campaign, Mr. Spencer shows us in a series of painted panels soldiers engaged in all kinds of everyday occupations, from making their own tea to washing their shirts in a river. It is not a record of heroic adventures, but a chronicle of the unending daily tasks and boring drudgery which make up nine-tenths of the life of the rank-and-file in war-time.

How some amateurs in the Army relieved this oppressive boredom by making drawings, either for their own pleasure or for the instruction or amusement of friends and relatives, will be seen in a representative selection of sketches here reproduced.

These so-called amateur drawings were produced by men who, although not artists by profession, were nevertheless skilled draughtsmen. Such men were fortunate. Their gift of facility with brush or pencil enabled them to spend many an hour engrossed in sketching which might otherwise have hung heavily upon their hands.

From the sketch by A. W. Daniels.

AMATEUR STUDIES

Not all the best War pictures came from "official," or even professional, artists. Both this sketch and the humorous drawing above it are amateur works of a high order, and are two of many such. This exceedingly fine study, drawn "on the spot" at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, September 15th, 1916, shows a scene at Flers village.

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From the sketch by T. Hansford White.

OVILLERS CHURCH

Another high-class sketch by a non-professional artist, who served as a lieutenant in the R.E. The remnant of the old church of this famous Somme village is shown silhouetted against the gun-flashes reflected in the eastern sky. Over the far ridge lay our front-line trenches, or rather posts : that is, short lengths of trench at intervals, each occupied by about 12 men. Winter, 1917.

From the sketch by T. Hansford White.

THE SUNKEN ROAD, COURCELETTE

The periods when comparative quiet reigned along the front were a godsend to the amateur artist. This drawing was made in February, 1917, at a time when rumour of the impending German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line had become sufficiently authenticated to cause extensive preparation for following up the enemy. Strenuous efforts were made to clear the forward roads in readiness for bringing up guns and stores, and in this picture the 10th Cornwall Pioneers are shown repairing a sunken road near Courcelette. The front line at this time was distant about 1,000 yards beyond the tree-clad hill seen in the middle distance.

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CHAPTER LXIII

MEMORIES XIII.—FLYING—TWENTY YEARS AGO

Flying has been for so long almost a commonplace that it is difficult for many to realise that in 1914 aeroplanes were still something of a novelty. More than this, there is all the difference in the world between a modern bomber and the somewhat crazy machines in which the early war-time pilots essayed flights over the German lines. In the following chapter a former member of the R.F.C. describes a typical bombing raid over the Rhineland and recaptures the spirit of that which was more than a mere adventure.

TWENTY years! A long time? Not a bit of it. I don't know about you, but to me it seems like yesterday. Anyway, there are some things I could never forget—never shall forget.

The Lure of the Past

The vibrant roar of aero engines being run up at the crack of dawn; the *taca-taca-taca-taca* of Lewis guns being tested in the pits; the dull *whoof, whoof, whoof* of "Archie" as he probed the blue; the smell of burnt oil wafting about in the crisp air; the acrid reek of cordite; the wail of wind in wires as you pulled out of such a dive that only the fear of death—in the shape of a Hun sitting on your tail—could send you into. The pit-a-pat of raindrops falling on the tin roof of a Nissen hut, with a batman standing by with a cup of tea and the welcome news that flying was "washed out" on account of the weather. What joy to be able to roll over and go to sleep again! No, the memory of these things can never be erased, although it may be hard to explain why. Those of you who were there will understand.

What a queer sort of life it was. Snatching a meagre breakfast while the stars were still in the sky, knowing that before the hour was out one might be a heap of cinders under a tangle of twisted wire. It would be somebody's turn. Every day it was somebody's turn. In 1918 new pilots came and were gone almost before we had time to learn their names. In my squadron, No. 55, Independent Air Force, doing long-distance daylight raids on the Rhine towns, casualties reached their peak in August 1918, when within the month we lost more than thirty officers.

Some managed to get back across the lines, shot to pieces, to die on the tarmac; some went down in flames. Some went out and failed to return; to this day no one knows what happened to them. "Missing" was a broad term in the R.F.C. Every member of the Squadron knew, of course, that it was only a matter of time before Old Man Death would turn up his number. We became accustomed to the thought, and it no longer worried us.

Eat, drink, and be merry was the only safe line to adopt if you wanted to keep your tottering nerves together, and if by day we earned our pay, then we spent it royally by night. What nights they were! But perhaps the less we say about them, the better. Well, it was nobody's business but our own, for we knew what awaited us on the morrow. How would you like to come with us to-morrow, and see for yourself—say, to Stuttgart?

Sentenced for Bombing Civilians

As a matter of detail, it was on a Stuttgart show that I went "west." Was I lucky? I certainly was—to fall out of control for rather more than three miles, goggles smashed, a dead gunner in the back seat, petrol slopping over everything, yet to get away with it, even though I spent the last three months of the War in Germany, part of the time under sentence of death for bombing "undefended" towns. At least, that was the charge under which I was tried by a military tribunal. But that's another story. Let us go on a "show," starting at the beginning.

"Wake up, sir. Cup o' tea, sir. You leave the ground in half an hour." That was the way my batman usually broke the bad news.

"What's the time?"

"Four o'clock, sir. Nice fine morning."

"Fine morning, my foot," I grumble, as I drag myself out of bed.

I am afraid my idea of a fine morning at that period was a steady downpour of rain, with visibility "nil."

I dress quietly, so that I do not waken those who are not on the show, putting on thick woollen underwear, and a sweater under my tunic; Sidcot suit and sheepskin boots go on top. Helmet, goggles and gauntlets can be adjusted later. No washing or shaving. There will be plenty of time for that when we get back—if we do. If we don't—well, what does it matter?

Over in the candle-lit mess, a dozen forms, booted and padded like myself, are standing round a table sipping hot tea or coffee, and munching biscuits. There isn't much talking. Four-ten in the morning is no time for conversation, anyway, but with nearly five hours of hell ahead of us one is even less inclined for inconsequential chatter.

"How's the wind?" asks somebody.

"Westerly; thirty miles an hour at twenty thousand," answers someone else.

Nothing more is said, but everyone was thinking the same thing. An hour and a half to get to the objective with the wind behind us, and three hours to get home; three hours, fighting every inch of the way against the crack *jagdstaffeln* (fighter squadrons) which the enemy has sent down from up north to try to stop us. Germany was reaping the bitter harvest sown by her Zeppelins over London, and she did not like it. By the middle of 1918 the muttering of the civil population of the Rhine towns was getting ominous, and the German Government knew that something would have to be done about it, or there was likely to be a flare-up. As indeed there was, at the finish.

Getting Ready to Go

Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle; up to the sheds we troop. The six machines that are to do the show are standing ready, our mechanics waiting for us, or staggering under the weight of 112 or 230 lb. bombs which they are putting on the bomb racks. The pilots make for the map-room, to look at an air photograph of the objective, while the gunners draw their guns and ammunition from the gun-room. A moment or two later the silence is split by the chatter of machine guns, as the weapons on which our lives will soon depend are tested in the pits constructed for that purpose.

Whoof! whoof! whoof! Distant Archie sounds like the barking of an

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angry dog. What's going on ? High in the sky, now grey with the approach of dawn, a line of smoke-bursts blossom out like tiny pink bubbles as they catch the first rays of the still hidden sun. They can't be lower than twenty thousand feet. "There he is!" cries someone. Ahead of the bursts a microscopic speck is creeping across the sky, flashing curiously from time to time.

We all know what it is: an enemy reconnaissance machine has made a dash over to see if there is anything doing on our aerodrome. The crew have seen our machines standing outside their hangars and know that we shall soon be on our way. That's all they wanted to know. The pilot is turning back now, the sunlight flashing on his wings as he turns; already his wireless will have "spilt the beans," and we shall have a warm reception at the lines.

"Start up!" The C.O. comes out of the squadron office, and his crisp command stirs everyone to activity. Fitters climb into the cockpits, and again the silence is shattered as one by one the high-powered engines burst into song, putting to flight the crows that were strutting about on the aerodrome. A last draw at our cigarettes and they are flung aside; it will be five hours before we can have another—that is, if we are lucky. Straps are tightened, buckles pulled up, goggles adjusted, gauntlets pulled on (two pairs; one of pure silk, which goes under the heavier fur-backed ones).

The Take-off

Hardly able to move in our cumbersome equipment, we squeeze ourselves into our cockpits and secure the safety belts. Now we are all set. The roar of the engines rises to a deafening bellow as we taxi out into position for the take-off; slowly we swing round into the wind, propellers idling, eyes on the leader. He gives the signal. As one, the engines roar again; the machines waddle forward like startled geese, at ever increasing speed: the tails lift; the wheels skim the ground; then, suddenly, the geese become swans as we soar gracefully into the air.

Up, up we go, circling as we climb steadily for height, and not until our altimeters register 15,000 feet does our leader turn towards the lines. He knows what we are likely to meet when we get to them, and that the greater our height the better chance we shall have of getting through, for a scout that can make rings round a two-seater at 10,000 feet may find itself outclassed at 20,000. Moreover, it will be at its ceiling; that is, as high as it can get; in the rarefied air it will be hard to control, and one bad turn may cost it a thousand feet of height, in which case it will have its work cut out to catch up with us again.[1]

Photo: German Official.

ESCAPE

An interesting German official photograph showing the method of escape for an observation-officer should his balloon be attacked by hostile aircraft. The method was simple: a leap for life, hoping that the parachute would do what was expected of it. Balloons were exceptionally vulnerable craft—large, static, defenceless, and inflammable; and although solicitous aeroplanes were generally at hand to provide all the protection possible, a balloonist's job was hardly a "cushy" one.

What an amazing panorama is spread out before us as we roar towards the lines. Far away to the right are the Swiss Alps, snowy peaks rose-tinted by the rays of the rising sun. Straight ahead lies Germany, forbidding, mysterious. To the left, as far as the eye can see, an incredible network of zigzag lines winds through a world of desolation until it is lost in the purple distance. Here and there tiny white cloudlets appear miraculously among the myriad shell-holes, that look like nothing so much as an enlarged photograph of the moon. There is no movement except at one place where a gas-attack is in progress. It is hard to believe that within our range of vision a million men are crouching like animals in the earth, each an infinitesimal cog in the machinery of war.

Accounting for a Balloon

Hello! What's that? Miles and miles away to the left, so low as to appear almost on the ground, there is a sudden lurid blaze of orange fire; above it, a great cloud of black smoke rises

[1] At sea-level barometric pressure is 29.92 inches. At 10,000 feet it has dropped to 20.58 inches, and at 20,000 ft. to 13.75 inches.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE NAUROY OF WAR-TIME

Nauroy lies 5 km. south of Le Catelet, 11 km. north of St. Quentin, and about 1½ km. east of the southern end of the St. Quentin Canal tunnel. It is approximately 6 km. distant from the northern mouth of the tunnel, illustrated on page 1009. Being just behind the Hindenburg Line, the village was seized by the 30th American Division during the great attack of September 29th, 1918. Australian troops were also in evidence at Nauroy, and this Australian official photograph shows the wrecked village two days after the Americans had captured it.

sluggishly into the air. Pushing up my goggles I stare at the spot, and can just make out the cause. Someone has got a balloon, evidently one of the enemy's, for the wreckage is falling well over his side. The scout that has done the dirty work streaks for home, hotly pursued by avenging Archie, while the observers who were in the " sausage " float earthward on their mushroom-like parachutes.

Whoof-bang ! A flash straight ahead, and my nostrils twitch at the sickly smell of high-explosive. My propeller disperses the smoke as we roar through it. Archie ! Another burst, another and another. They've got our height, but it makes no difference ; we must continue to fly straight, for we have neither time nor petrol to dodge about. I glance behind.

Across the sky, along the path we have flown, lies a sinister black wake —miles of it. Hundreds of shells have been fired at us and they are still coming up, little, writhing, black cloudlets, each with a darting, fiery heart. *Bang !* I flinch as one, closer than the others, bursts underneath my machine and shoots it up like an express lift. Anxiously I try the controls and draw a deep breath of relief when I find they are still working properly.

I glance back at Cox, my gunner. He is leaning over the side of the cockpit, chin cupped in his gloved hand, jaws moving slowly as he chews a piece of gum, at the same time regarding the landscape below with no more concern than a shepherd looking over the paddock gate. He is a good boy, is Cox ; a corporal who has volunteered for the job. He'll be going home shortly to get his " wings." Jimmy McCudden, V.C., Billy Barker, V.C., and a lot of other star turns began their careers in a gunner's cockpit.

Away to the north a Hun two-seater, with green and brown-blotched wings and fuselage—a Hannoveraner by the cut of its tail—is crossing over to our side of the lines, probably on a photographic mission. There he goes, heading for the St. Michel Salient. Well, we shan't worry him. I've often met enemy two-seaters when I've been out alone on the same sort of work, but by mutual consent we seldom interfered with each other. Maybe we both realised that life was quite hard enough, without adding to our troubles.

A Bearded Aviator

I remember one day meeting one nearly head-on ; he passed about a couple of hundred feet below me, going in the opposite direction. Looking down over the side of my cockpit I was staggered to see that the Hun in the back seat had a big bushy beard

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—the most astonishing sight I ever saw in my life, I think. In the R.F.C. the average age of a gunner, or observer, would be about nineteen. Plenty were not a day more than seventeen.

Looking up, the Hun with the whiskers saw me looking down, and waved a greeting. Cox, leaning far over the side, rudely shoved out two fingers at him and then sank back in his seat, convulsed with mirth. I laughed every time I thought about it for a long time afterwards.

What's ahead ? Bending down and staring forward through my centre section, I can just make out a cloud of tiny black specks, circling against the sky, now eggshell blue, for all the world like a swarm of midges on a summer's evening. Huns ! They're waiting for us to get farther over so that if one of our machines is damaged it will not be able to get back to its own side of the lines. The enemy machines begin to take more definite shape as we draw nearer to them, and presently it is possible to make out the shark-like bodies of Albatrosses, Pfalz, and Fokker Triplanes.

Five minutes later comes the first clash. Nine enemy fighters, painted in blue and yellow stripes, come down with a roar and a rush. We know them well ; they come from Metz. In an instant the air is filled with the staccato clatter of machine guns, as if a school of rattlesnakes had been disturbed. Tracer bullets cut criss-cross lines through the still air ; ours are white, and the German's black ; you can smell them as you go through them.

The enemy are old hands, and they've brought their nerves with them. They press home their attack and do not zoom up from the bottom of their dive until they are less than twenty feet over our heads. It is rather terrifying, this, because, quite apart from bullets, a collision seems inevitable. Indeed, there is every chance of one should an enemy pilot be hit or his machine damaged, as he roars down.

Taking the First Brush

As it is, one of them has not pulled out, although he has turned aside. There he goes, in a long shallow glide. Either the pilot or his machine has " stopped one " and he is concentrating on getting his feet on good solid earth. Our own formation is still intact, and we edge a little closer together for company and mutual protection. I look across at the next man to me, some twenty-five yards away. He pushes up his goggles and smiles. Good ! He's a new man, and they don't all take the first brush so calmly. It isn't easy. The smack of a

Photo : Keystone.

THE NAUROY OF PEACE-TIME

The enemy held out for many hours along the whole front of the II American Corps, and Nauroy was one of many places which were won only at the cost of most bitter fighting. Its capture followed that of Bellicourt, which had also been effected by the 30th American Division under its commander, Major-General Lewis ; on the left of this division was the 27th American Division, under Major-General O'Ryan, which encountered the heavy resistance at Bony alluded to on page 1009. The 5th and 3rd Australian Divisions, behind the Americans, were commanded respectively by Majors-General Hobbs and Gellibrand.

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bullet sounds much worse at twenty thousand feet than it does on the ground; maybe you're apt to remember the hundred gallons of petrol you're sitting on. One explosive bullet through that and . . . but don't let's think about it.

On we go. The long winding ribbon of the Rhine drops away behind us. With a following wind of thirty miles an hour we are now covering the ground at a hundred and fifty miles an hour, which means that we shall reach the objective in about an hour and a half. But it will be all the harder coming back—three hours, at least.

Odd Huns are still hanging on to us, like wolves harassing a herd of deer; and for the same reason. They are waiting for a straggler. Let one pilot get out of place and he will be lucky if he gets back to it again, for instantly he will be a mark for a dozen or more guns. Or, should a pilot's engine let him down now, the chances are that he will be a dead man long before he can reach the ground.

But there is no sense in worrying about these things. The Huns who met us at the lines are beginning to drop away now, their petrol exhausted, but their place is taken by others. Our destination will be known at every enemy headquarters by this time, and every *staffel* of scouts stationed within a hundred miles of our route will be sent up to intercept us. Time and time again they attack. Sometimes one, by himself, more daring than the rest, will charge right up to the muzzles of our guns; sometimes half-a-dozen will come in together from different angles, trying to flurry our gunners or cause the formation to open out.

Over a German Town

Stuttgart appears ahead, a city of microscopic houses spread across the landscape; there are some important targets here if only we can hit them, motor works, magneto works, and the like. The important moment has arrived. The Huns begin to glide away, but we know what is coming as well as they do.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Up comes the barrage, and in a few seconds the air is filled with smoke, flame, and hurtling metal. *Crash!* My machine quivers like a thoroughbred as something lashes it with the ferocity of a sjambok. I moisten my lips and try the controls. O.K. A gaping hole has appeared in the lower port plane, not six inches from the main spar. A piece of fabric flaps aft like a yacht's pennant in a squall. On the starboard side a cross-bracing wire is threshing about and an interplane strut looks as if something has taken a bite out of it—which, in fact, it has.

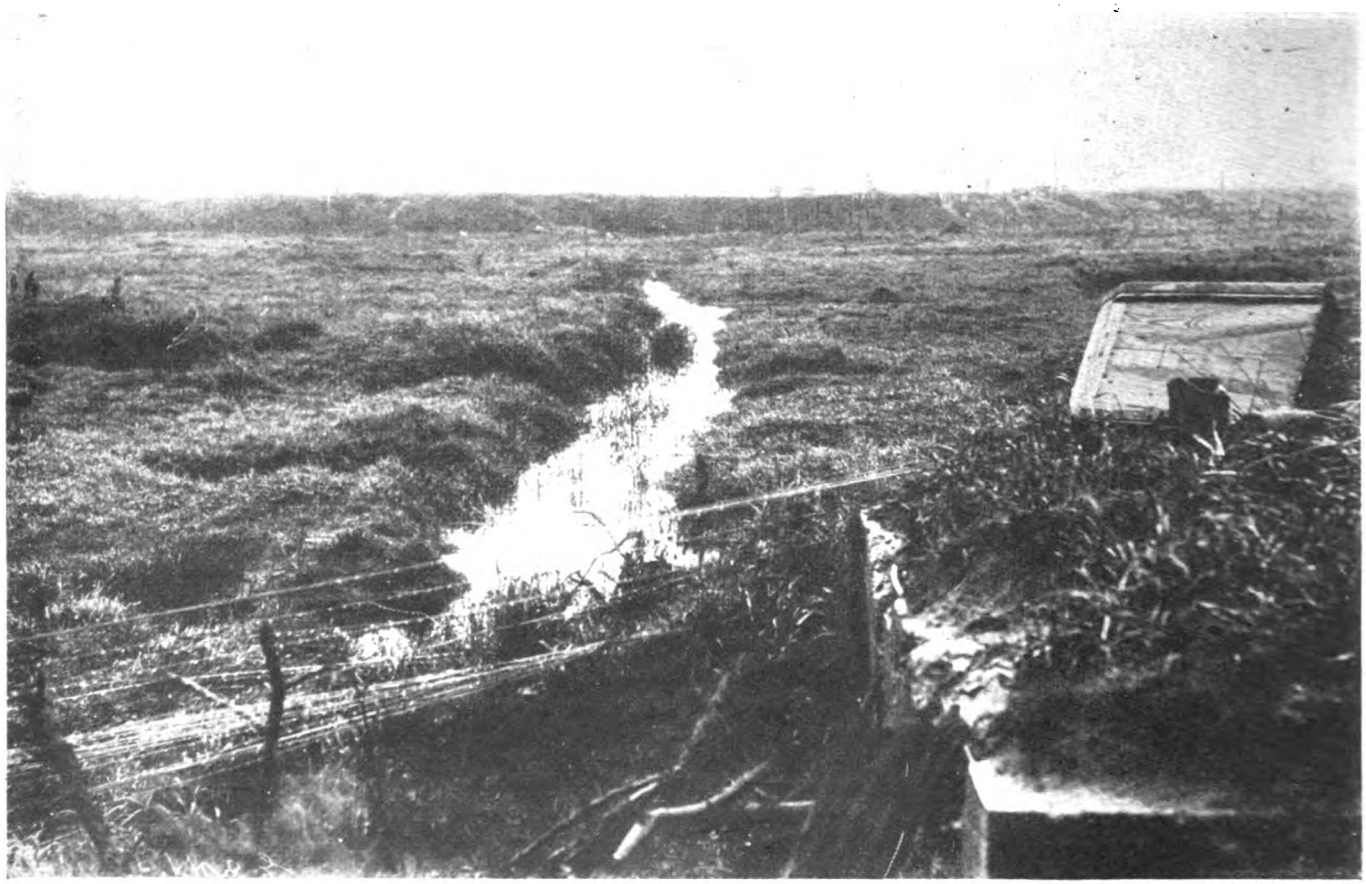

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SINKING INTO OBLIVION

An interesting photograph, taken by an Australian photographer on Armistice Day, 1918, of ground occupied by the Anzacs more than two years previously. The scene is near Fromelles, and the water-filled ditch is one which in 1916 had been drained to form a trench, but had subsequently returned to its aquatic condition. In the background are German trenches, and in the foreground barbed wire and various other relics of former fighting.

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Photo: Keystone.

A QUIET COUNTRY BACKWATER

Another stretch of the ditch seen opposite, showing how much a barren landscape may be improved by even less than two decades' growth of timber. Fromelles, it will be recollected, lies half-way between Armentières and La Bassée, and slightly north-east of Neuve-Chapelle. The I and II Anzac Corps took over the section of the line between Armentières and a point opposite Fromelles upon their arrival on the Western Front in the Spring of 1916, when they were incorporated in the Second Army.

We're turning now, slowly, to come up wind to drop our bombs; at the same time we open out slightly. The moment has come. There is no messing about with bomb-sights. I take the centre of the town at the junction of my fuselage and lower starboard plane, and then, hand grasping the bomb toggle, fix my eyes on the leader's machine. A Very light curves through the air. It's the "Let go" signal. I jerk back the toggle and the machine rocks slightly as the two bombs, each weighing a hundredweight, hurtle down into the void.

Where are they going? I lean over the side of the cockpit, to watch them. There they are, looking like two elongated eggs, hanging in space. There are a dozen altogether, all rushing earthward at something over a hundred miles an hour, but because we are looking at them end-on they appear to be stationary. Gradually they become smaller . . . smaller . . . smaller, until they disappear altogether. Nothing happens. Seconds pass, and still nothing happens. Can they all have been duds?

Death Wings its Way

It was a queer sensation, waiting for the bombs to burst. Actually, from our normal altitude, they took about three-quarters-of-a-minute to reach the ground and that seems a long time when one is waiting. Often, during that time, I have thought "Death is on its way to somebody; in twenty seconds someone who is now alive will be dead, but he has no idea of it."

Had I any scruples? None whatever. One thought only in the abstract, as a gunner shooting at a distant mark which he cannot see. There is no sign of life on the ground; one can hardly pick out the buildings, so far away are they. There is nothing disturbing in killing someone you do not know, someone you cannot see, someone you do not know exists. The reaction is quite different from shooting a fellow on the ground, in a trench show, for instance. There you can see your man; if you killed him, see what you had done. There is no doubt about it. On the other hand, for all I knew my bomb might have fallen into somebody's back garden and done no more damage than spoil the cabbage patch. You did not know, so there was no difficulty in remaining calm and dispassionate. But what about those bombs we dropped?

There they go! A pillar of white smoke spurts upwards, followed an instant later by a whole cloud of them. Good! One has hit the railway line; another has landed in the main square of the town, which should have put the wind up somebody—if nothing worse.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GETTING ON THE TARGET

A photograph whose main interest lies in the fact that it shows the type of machine flown during the War by the author of the accompanying chapter. The aeroplane is a D.H.4, and the gunner is here seen in the position which he would occupy when aiming at an enemy above and slightly forward of his own machine. The single Lewis gun was frequently replaced by a double gun.

Well, that's all. There is no more to see; nothing more to do except get home. Already the formation is beginning to turn as our leader takes up the homeward course. Quickly I glance around to make sure that I am in position; the other pilots are doing the same, for the real fireworks are about to begin.

One of the biggest frights I ever had in my life was at this particular moment of a similar show; or, rather, while we were over the objective; which, to be specific, was Mannheim. So interested was I in watching the town that I must have got out of position. Either that, or Don Waterous was at fault. (We never really discovered which.) He was flying in the "gallery"; that is, in the line up above.

Collision in Mid-air

Somehow or other we collided. The first thing I knew about it was a terrific bump which occurred just as Jock McKay, who was leading us, fired the "Let go" signal. Looking up, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a pair of wheels just leaving my "skylight." (The transparent area in the centre section, just over my head.) The wheels had, in fact, struck my top plane slap in the middle, and under the impact my machine recoiled like a tennis ball from a racquet.

Down I went, a good three hundred feet, straight under the formation—just as every one pulled his bomb toggle. There was no time for me to get out of the way; there was no time to do anything. There I sat, stiff with fright, while a cloud of bombs sailed down round me. Two, evidently from the same machine, missed my engine by not more than a couple of yards. Not one touched me—obviously, or I should not be writing this.

I must say it was an amazing stroke of luck. Sweating with panic, and with my heart in my mouth, as the saying is, I climbed back into my place. A nasty experience, believe me. But let us get back to the Stuttgart show.

Suddenly the barrage of hate dies away, and again we know the reason. A bunch of enemy aircraft are tearing along in our wake, and they're out for blood. We're over their home town and they're full out to show their girl friends what they can do. Well, they'll have to get on with it; there is nothing we can do except sit still and hope for the best. One can't start stunting when one is a hundred and fifty miles away from home; against this wind we shall only just have enough petrol to get back as it is.

Taca-taca-taca-taca. I look across at the next machine to me; the gunner is crouched over his guns, tracer bullets

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pouring from the two barrels as three machines attack him simultaneously from different angles.

TACA-TACA-TACA. My heart gives a lurch as a burst of bullets rip through my machine. My altimeter disappears in a cloud of splintered glass. I look back over my shoulder to see what is happening. Cox is firing, barrels pointing downwards, first one side of the fuselage then the other. So that's the game. I press my right foot gently on the rudder bar, enough to swing my tail aside, disclosing a blue-nosed Albatros that had crept up under my elevators.

Not a Pretty Sight

He is in the open, now, and Cox plasters him at point-blank range. He jerks up, turning slowly on to his back, and then begins to go down like a falling leaf. Cox throws me a grin, thumbs turned upward, jaws still chewing. He isn't pretty to look at. There is blood round his mouth where the biting slipstream has torn the skin off his lips. The temperature is seldom above zero at 21,000 feet—that's our height now we are relieved of the weight of our bombs —and frostbite sends a lot of our fellows to hospital.[1]

I take a quick look round the formation to make sure that I am still in position. Hello, we are only five machines. Where is the other ? I look downward over the side and my heart seems to go stone cold as my eyes fall on a gigantic plume of black smoke, ending in a spark of white light, that is falling like a shooting star. Quickly I look at the letters on the noses of the remaining machines to see who has gone. It's "E." That's Tim. He was deputy leader. Poor old Tim. We shall miss him at the piano. With a nasty feeling of nausea drying my mouth, I creep up into the deputy leader's place.

Of all the grim business on which we were engaged, seeing one of one's friends go down in flames was the most dreadful ordeal of all. I shall never forget the first machine I saw go that way. The pilot's name was ——; we had learnt to fly together. An explosive bullet must have hit his rear main tank. I was flying next to him in the formation, and we were actually smiling at each other when it happened.

Suddenly a cloud of black, greasy smoke poured aft from the tank between him and his gunner. The gunner was completely enveloped in it, but I could just see him standing up in it, with his hands over his face. The horrible thing was, poor —— was still unaware that Old Man Death had claimed him. For several seconds I could only stare, fascinated; then I pointed.

[1] Temperature falls about 1 degree Fahrenheit for every 330 feet rise in altitude. If, therefore, the temperature on the ground is 60 degrees, at 20,000 feet the thermometer will register zero.

Looking Back—to see Death

He looked back to see what I was pointing out, and looked death in the face. He threw a quick glance across at me and half raised his hand. The machine plunged downwards on its four-mile drop to oblivion. For an hour afterwards I could see that ghastly trail of smoke, reaching, it seemed, from heaven to earth. And you will believe me when I say that it took more than one spot of whisky to put me to sleep that night. But let us get on.

I look at the watch on my instrument board and see that we still have two hours to go before we reach the lines. Two hours! Two years, more like. Already it seems an eternity since we took off. The Huns are still at us, new ones coming up to take the place of those that fall. The chatter of machine-gun fire becomes monotonous. A bullet smashes through my windscreen and I crouch a little lower in the cockpit.

Fear becomes less acute as weariness grows; the altitude is beginning to tell. *Taca-taca-taca.* On all sides of me gunners are pointing their Lewises this way and that, shooting, flinging the empty drums overboard in their haste

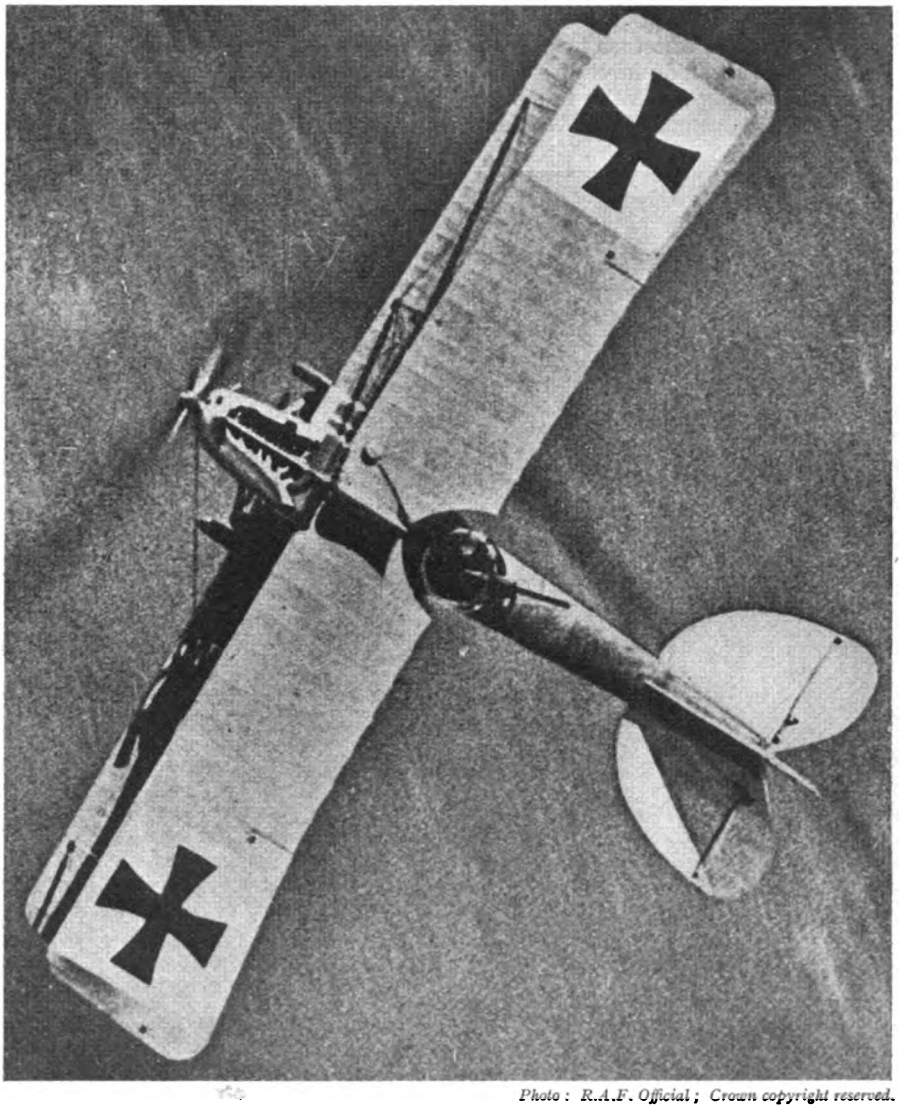

Photo: R.A.F. Official; Crown copyright reserved.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

A German two-seater photographed by a machine above it. This illustration helps to render clear the significance of being "on an enemy's tail," as it is called, during an aerial duel. Such a position, above one's foe and slightly behind him, exposes his most vulnerable parts in the way most disadvantageous to him, and at the same time sets the attacker in the best attitude for holding the target indefinitely with his gun.

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to reload, and shooting again. Huns are everywhere. In a sort of dream I see the gunner in No. 2 machine sink down and disappear from sight. He doesn't reappear, and his gun, pointing pathetically heavenward, tells its own story. He's down. The Boche see the harmless gun, too, and, knowing what it means, concentrate on that machine, for they can do so with impunity.

Heaven help the wretched pilot; he'll be lucky to get back. There he goes already. Down tilts his nose, white smoke pouring from the engine—steam from a punctured radiator, or petrol from a cut lead pouring over the hot engine. If it's the former, he's got a chance; if it's the latter—well, one spark from the exhaust, or one tracer bullet, will be enough to fire the vapour. Down he goes, twisting and turning to escape the jackals who rush in to finish him off. We can't do anything about it; no use risking the entire formation for the sake of one machine. We don't see the end. The cluster of wheeling specks becomes smaller and smaller, and finally disappears in the blue depths of the void below and behind us.

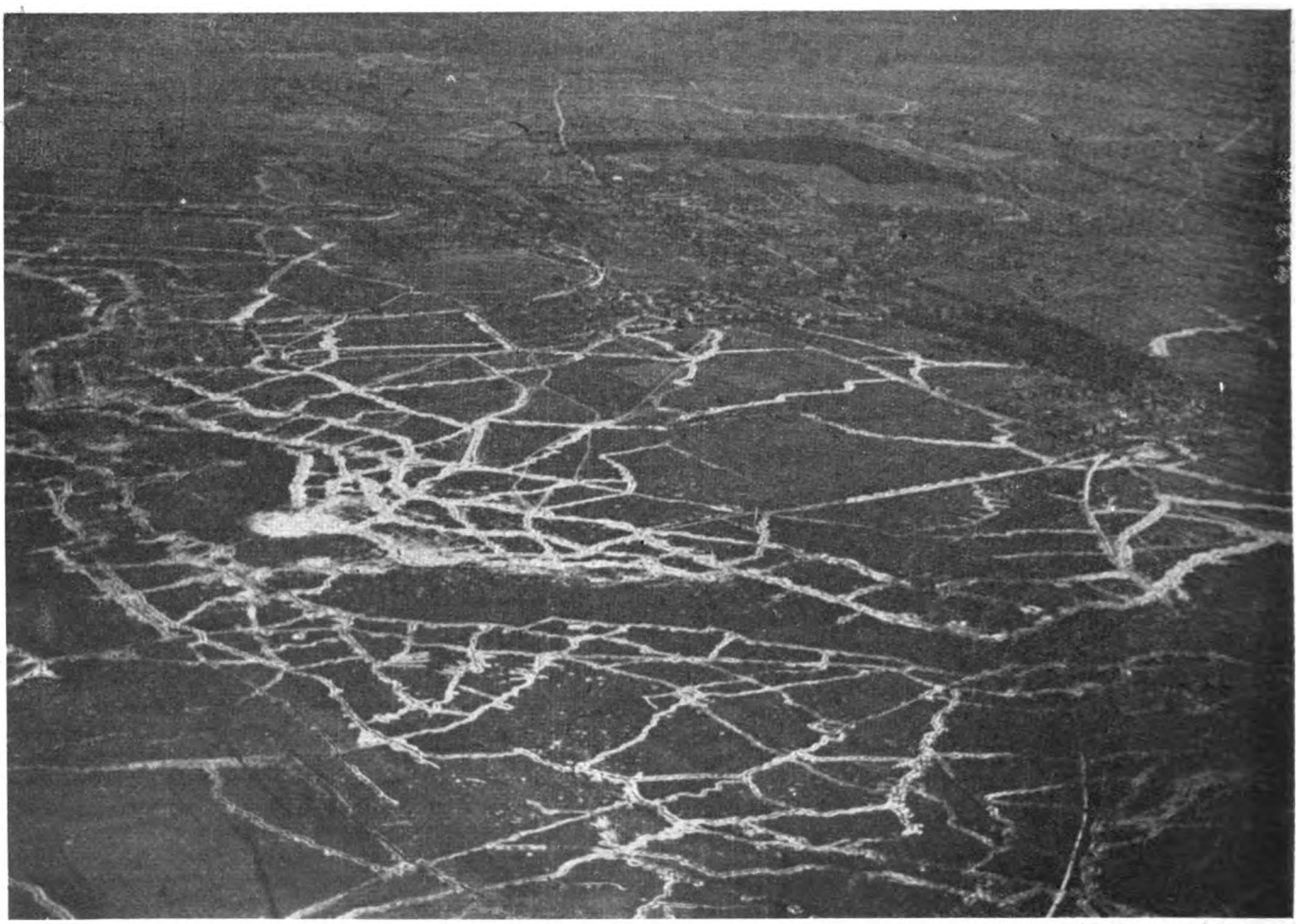
Strasbourg Ahead

What's the time? An hour to go. The Rhine, with Strasbourg nestling beside it, is just ahead. We hardly seem to be moving. I take a chocolate from the pocket under my dashboard and munch it without enthusiasm. The shooting is less intense now, the reason being that the gunners are running short of ammunition and they're using it sparingly.

I am jerked from a condition bordering on semi-coma by the actions of our leader. His nose tilts up, tracers spurting from the front gun. Then I see the reason. A blue and orange Pfalz is attacking him from the front. Perhaps he hoped to catch him unawares. If so, he made a mistake. At the last moment the Hun swerves, obviously hit. As the machine passes me not more than twenty feet away I see the pilot's white face clearly, as he looks up through his big goggles.

It's a queer feeling to see the other fellow; in air-fighting one tends to forget that there is a man in the other machine. Still watching him I see his top wing fold back. Both wings tear off, and the torpedo-shaped fuselage, with the engine still on, shoots through space like a badly-aimed dart. Poor devil. Let's hope he's got a bullet in him, too, to spare him the mental agony of that last fearful rush. It must seem like a lifetime.

What's the time? Twenty minutes to go. Thank God! And when I say that I mean it. Leaning over the side I let the cold air pour into my lungs to pull me together. In the distance, straight ahead, I can see what looks like two large white molehills. They are the lime-pits near Nancy, over our side of the lines. Home!



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TRENCHES FROM THE AIR

A front-line trench system presents to the air-pilot a sight remarkable indeed. Like veins in a block of marble the incredible network of zigzag lines scores the ground, and it is difficult to believe that reason or method of any sort can underlie it. This photograph was taken above chalky country, where the whiteness of the excavated material, against the dark background of the surface-soil, renders the map-like panorama especially clear-cut.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RICHTHOFEN'S "CIRCUS" READY FOR ACTION

Baron von Richthofen's famous squadron, known as his "circus," photographed from the air as the machines were lined up ready to take off for a "business" flight. The method of this noted ace was to wait, behind the German lines, until a flight of British aeroplanes ventured across for reconnaissance or raiding purposes, and thereafter to grapple with them for just so long as he chose. Rarely, if ever, did he take his squadron over British territory. Such a policy generally gave the German airmen a considerable advantage.

In my life I've seen some lovely views, but none more glorious than the two lime-pits over Pont-à-Mousson, after four hours up the Rhine.

Over—until To-morrow

The Huns make one last determined effort to stop us, but it's no use, although it is warm work while it lasts. Our leader puts his nose down and makes a dash for it, and the rest of us follow. The needles of our air-speed indicators creep round their dials. The wind snatches at us, clutches at the vibrating wires, howling like a thousand devils. We're over. The "wash out" signal (land independently) flashes from the leader's machine, and I ease the stick back. Smoothly we drop earthward. Our wheels touch . . . bump . . . bump again; the machine runs to a standstill near the sheds.

My fitter runs out. "Engine all right, sir?"

I nod.

My rigger appears. "Everything all right, sir?"

"She's inclined to be a trifle left wing low," I murmur, as I climb stiffly to the ground. "Get it put right for to-morrow."

To-morrow! Yes, it's got to be done all over again to-morrow. But why worry about that; we've got the rest of the day in front of us. It wasn't wise for an airman to think too far ahead—twenty years ago.

Artillery spotting, perhaps the most trying work of all, for the pilot must needs act under the command of a battery officer who might, or might not, know his difficulties. And the art. obs. pilot or observer had little chance of seeing his name in dispatches. Tiring work, difficult work, and often thankless work was his portion. Long-distance reconnaissance, leaning over the side in a perishing blast of air, far away in hostile country, counting railway trucks in a siding or searching for the "blaze" of a hidden gun. Escort duty, shepherding all and sundry. Balloon strafing, which was a trip through hell and back. Trench strafing, a pastime that needed a quick hand and a clear eye. Contact patrol, the tricky business of keeping in touch with fellows who were pushing forward on the ground, flying through a shower of shells going both ways. One little slip and the pilot on this job could bring down a barrage on the wrong place with disastrous results. Night bombing, creeping through the murk, dodging the ever-questing searchlight beams and flashing Archie, with always the chance of colliding with another machine, either one of the enemy, or one of your own coming back. Oh, yes, there were plenty of jobs, and if, when we got back, we had sheets to sleep in, well, we needed them. I'll tell you more about these jobs one day.

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CHAPTER LXIV

THE FIRST AND SECOND BATTLES OF GAZA

The first major obstacle confronting the advancing British force in Palestine was the ancient town of Gaza. Here, it speedily became apparent, the Turks intended to stand. Gaza stands hard by the Mediterranean coast, and is protected to the south-west by a broad belt of desert-like country, and to the eastward by a series of ridges. Surrounding the town are many gardens, vineyards, and the like, each bounded by cactus-hedges. As is made clear in the following chapter, once the element of surprise was lost Gaza presented to the attacking force a most difficult problem.

MURRAY'S army passed through a long period of rest and re-organisation after its success at Rafah in January, 1917. It now lay at the Mediterranean end of the eastern frontier of Sinai, preparing to force its way north-eastwards into Palestine. The main physical obstacles confronting it were, firstly, the Wadi Ghazze—a wide and deeply-cut river which, though often in heavy spate during the rains, at this season contained only a few pools; and, secondly, the line of low hills lying between Gaza and Beersheba.

Southern Palestine

The country which the troops were now about to enter lends itself to simple description. It consists of four clearly marked and parallel features. Working eastward from the coast, there is first the maritime plain, then the central range extending from the Lebanon to the Judæan mountains, then the great depression—the deepest in the world—which includes the River Jordan and the Dead Sea, and, finally, the eastern range running from " that high hill the hill of Hermon " to the mountains of Gilead and Moab.

The two cities of Gaza and Beersheba are the twin gates of Palestine. In the story of this campaign they fill a nearly equal place, but in history Gaza stands out as much the more important of the two; for it lies on the coastal road along which alone water can be found sufficient to fulfil the needs of armies.

The Pharaohs between the 16th and 14th centuries B.C., and the Ptolemies 1,100 years later, held it or fought for it as a bridge-head beyond the desert from Egypt. So it has been called not only the door of Asia, but also the outpost of Africa. Alexander, Saladin, and Napoleon battled round its walls, and it has probably been taken and destroyed more often than any city in the world.

It was now once again to be the gage of victory. But in the first of our battles there, Gaza was not the vital point of hostile resistance. On the contrary, it was merely a post to the flank of the Turkish line of communications, which ran northwards through Beersheba to Ludd and Afule.

Early in March the heads of the railway and of the pipe-line reached Khan Yunis, so that the whole force could now be concentrated towards that point. Murray decided to open the campaign by a blow at Gaza. But the objective was 15 miles distant, and water was too scarce and transport too scanty to admit of an advance in full strength so far from his base. With the resources available he could do no more than repeat the methods which had proved so successful at Magdhaba and Rafah—that is, a *coup de main* with a time-limit of 24 hours.

Secrecy Essential

How to do that successfully was the problem. The Turks, warned by past experience, were certain to be on the alert; hence secrecy was essential. The ground round Gaza was strong, and was thought to be held by some 2,000 troops. The other Turkish forces to be considered numbered about 14,000 rifles, and were posted away to the east and south-east at distances of 10 to 16 miles over an easy country. Speed and forceful action were therefore necessary if the town were to be captured before the arrival of reinforcements.

Dobell was placed in charge. His plan was to use a division for the direct attack, and to form a screen of troops to the east, behind which the assailants might hope to carry out their tasks unmolested except by the defenders.

He made Deir el Balah—a well-wooded area only 10 miles from Gaza—his base, and issued orders for the operation to take place on March 26th. He placed the two Mounted Divisions and the 53rd (Welsh Territorial) Division under Chetwode, and retained personal control of the 52nd (Lowland) and 54th (East Anglian) Divisions and the Imperial Camel Corps.

The two Mounted Divisions were to envelop Gaza on the north and east, and to ward off the Turkish reinforcements. Should it be found necessary, they were to join in the attack from the north and north-east. Their line was to be extended to the south by the Cameliers, and, echelonned behind the right rear of the latter, the 54th Division (less one brigade group), was to face south-east from the Sheikh Abbas ridge, ready either to deal with Turkish reinforcements or to help the 53rd Division as required.

Money's Detachment—mainly the 2/4th West Kent Battalion—was to watch the Turks on the coastal side, and the remainder of the 53rd Division was to attack Gaza from the south, making Ali Muntar, whither Samson had carried the gates of Gaza, the main objective. A group of the 54th Division, consisting of the 161st Infantry Brigade and the 271st Brigade R.F.A., was to cross the wadi towards Burjabiye, for use (under instructions from Dobell) in reinforcing either the 53rd or the 54th Division as required.

The Wadi Ghazze Crossed

Of the three batteries of 60-pounders available, only one section per battery was, owing to shortage of transport, to take part in the attack. The 52nd Division was to remain in reserve. Sir Archibald Murray, who had come up from Cairo, would remain at El Arish in his train. Dobell's battle headquarters were to be at In Seirat. Chetwode was also to be at In Seirat at the opening of the battle, but was to move later to Sheikh Abbas.

In the early morning the troops passed the Wadi Ghazze without opposition. A thick fog rolled up from the sea, but not till 4.30 a.m., by which time the infantry were nearly across the obstacle.

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The Mounted Divisions were indeed caught in it; but, skilfully led, with the Anzacs in front, they passed through it almost without a check. By the time the fog cleared—about 8 a.m.—they were well on the road to their allotted positions, and were surprising and picking up small groups of Turks and Germans. The troops were in the highest spirits, confident in their powers, and rejoicing in rapid movement across a fine cavalry country.

Of the attacking division, the 158th and 160th Brigades were leading, each followed by an artillery brigade. Nine pages of orders had been written. The brigadiers had carefully reconnoitred the route. Then, at the last moment, the route of the 158th Brigade was changed. The new route had been marked with strips of white canvas, but some foolish persons thought it funny to remove them; and, consequently, in spite of careful prearrangement, a precious hour was wasted blundering through the darkness.

Once across the wadi, all speed was made. In spite of the fog, the brigadier galloped forward, and, with a fine sense of direction borne of a youth spent in the hunting-field, quickly found his allotted position and led his brigade directly thereto.

To the east of Gaza, and parallel with the road from that town to Beersheba, runs a main ridge which shoots out towards the Wadi Ghazze a succession of minor ridges, all more or less parallel to the Gaza—Rafah road. Of these the most important, from north to south, are the Es Sire Ridge, which culminates in a peak at Ali Muntar—a hill standing some 300 feet high, and well above the town of Gaza; the Burjabiye Ridge, crowned by the steep ascent to Mansura; and, connected with the latter along a steep escarpment, the ridge on which Sheikh Abbas stands.

A Delay of 1½ Hours

The assembly position of the 160th Brigade was at Shelufa on the Es Sire Ridge, that of the 158th Brigade at Mansura. The two brigades were at these points in touch with each other and organised for attack, at 8.30 a.m. Unfortunately the 159th Brigade, which the divisional commander (Dallas) decided also to employ in the attack, was retained by him on the eastern bank of the wadi till 9.30 a.m., and therefore could hardly come into action before noon.

In the meantime Dallas was making a reconnaissance and arranging for artillery support. This took so long that, although the two leading brigades could have advanced, covered by their guns, at 10.20, actually the attack did not begin till 11.50 a.m.

At 10 a.m. he had asked for the 161st Brigade Group, and his request had been granted. He sent a message ordering it to Mansura; but, owing to an error in staff work, the message was not received till 1.10 a.m., though all the time it was only one-and-a-half miles from that point.

We may now halt for a moment to note the dispositions of the troops just prior to the delivery of the attack, and to discuss a few matters which were to have a considerable bearing on the result of the battle.

The 53rd Division was moving forward deployed as under:

(Left)
160th Bde.
2/10th Middx. 1/4th Sussex.
2/4th Queens
(2/4th W. Kent in Money's Detachment)
(Centre)
158th Bde.
1/5th, 1/6th, 1/7th R.W.F. 1/1st Hertford.
(Right)
159th Bde.
1/5th Welch. 1/4th Cheshire. 1/4th Welch.
(1/7th Cheshire in divisional reserve)

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A BRITISH TANK AT GAZA

One of our few tanks employed on the Palestine front is here seen going into action during the second of the three Gaza battles. April 17th, 1917, was the date on which the machines made their début in the Gaza area, but they were not on the whole a success. There were too few of them, and the ground was against them. Many of the fissures referred to are both wide and deep. Small nullahs or ravines everywhere intersect it, and the flatter expanses are seamed with fissures of the type visible in the foreground of this picture.

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The two left brigades, separated by a wide valley, were both moving on Ali Muntar, supported by two brigades of field artillery and six 60-pounders. On the right, directed on Clay Hill, was the 159th Brigade, trying hard by fast movement to make up for lost time. The troops had made several night-marches in succession, and they had now been under arms since 5 o'clock on the previous evening (19 hours). They were therefore already tired men.

British Prospects High

The 54th Division was in position on the Sheikh Abbas Ridge, the Cameliers just north of the Gaza—Beersheba road, and the Mounted Divisions to the east and north of Gaza, effecting encirclement almost to the seashore. On the other side, the Turkish garrison was of course thoroughly aroused, and British patrols pushing eastwards had encountered resistance. But there was no sign yet, either from the ground or from the air, of any heavy hostile reinforcements.

Thus, though several hours of priceless daylight had been wasted owing to the fog and unnecessary delays, the prospects of a British victory were still high. There were, however, certain factors at work which were imposing severe handicaps upon us, and it may be convenient to discuss them at this point.

The first was that both Chetwode and Dobell were very short of staff officers and signal personnel. The result was that, quite early in the battle, such staff officers and signallers as there were became exhausted through overwork, and committed a number of unfortunate errors. The first of these occurred as follows: the 161st Brigade was under Dobell; when Dallas asked Chetwode for it, he was told that he could have it, and would find it at Sheikh Nebhan. But actually Dobell had already ordered it to Burjabiye without telling Chetwode or Dallas. The result was that until 1 p.m.—that is, for some important hours—touch with it was lost.

The second fault was a glut of commanders, no fewer than three being at work when one should have sufficed. Murray had arrived at El Arish, and had established his headquarters in a train there. He had no troops at his disposal with which to influence the battle, and he consumed much of the time of Dobell's staff in references, consultations, and the transmission of information over the telephone. He would have been much better placed in Cairo.

Then Dobell and Chetwode, both

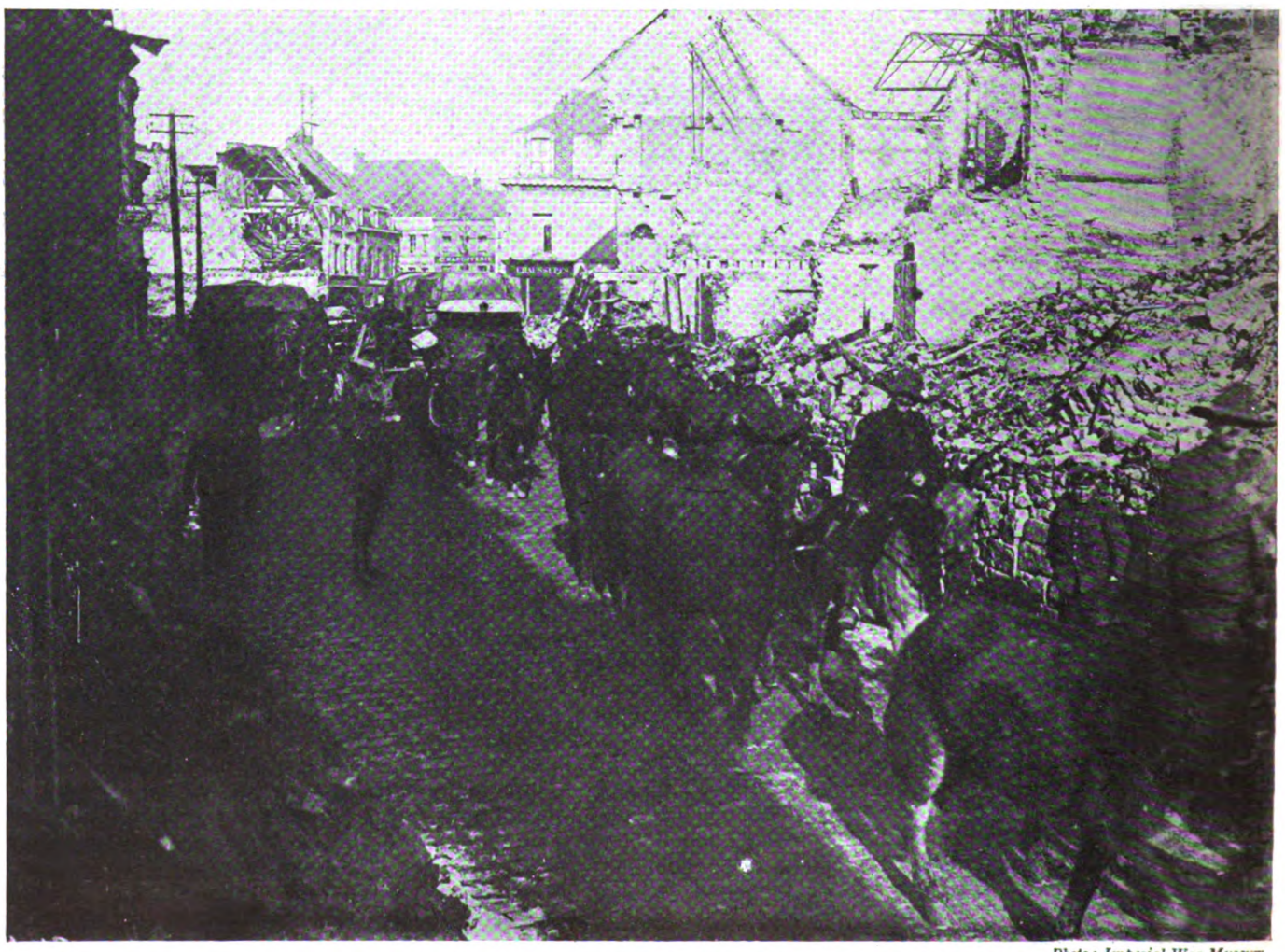

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN LE CATEAU AFTER THE ARMISTICE

Le Cateau carries with it poignant memories of both ends of the War—of the First Battle of Le Cateau away back in the "Old Contemptible" days of August, 1914, and of the Second Battle, fought between October 6th and 12th, 1918, when a retreat of a very different nature was in progress. This photograph belongs to the later phase, and shows Australian troops passing amid Le Cateau's ruined shops and houses on November 15th, 1918. The position of Le Cateau is, of course, between Cambrai and St. Quentin—to be exact, 23 km. east-south-east of the former, and 33 km. north-east of the latter.

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Photo: Keystone.

IN LE CATEAU MUCH LONGER AFTER THE ARMISTICE

The central square of the little town is shown in this contemporary picture. Naturally there are many cemeteries in the neighbourhood, of which two incorporate the name of Le Cateau itself. There are (1) Le Cateau Military Cemetery, on the scene of the II Corps's famous engagement of August 26th, 1914; (2) Le Cateau Communal Cemetery, used during August and September, 1914, and the closing months of 1918; (3) Highland Cemetery; (4) Quietiste Cemetery, used in October, 1918, and taking its name from an eighteenth-century sect known as the *Quiétistes*, whose leader, Fénélon, Bishop of Cambrai, dwelt in a house used by us as divisional H.Q.

commanding in effect the same troops, sat together at In Seirat. In view of the scarcity of staff officers and signal personnel, to keep two commanders and two staffs together, wasting one another's time, was inexcusable.

The Merits of Fog

These may seem small matters. Yet they were to exercise a fatal influence on the fortunes of the day. As to the fog, which has been so much blamed, it should have been treated as an advantage, not as a drawback: quite a large proportion of attacks in the Great War, as in earlier wars, owed their success to fog. Muscle-driven troops cannot advance against machine-gun fire without some form of protection: darkness, fog, bullet-proof tanks, or the covering fire of artillery.

The Anzacs appreciated this point, and sped happily through the fog to their task, knowing full well that circumstances were in their favour. The brigadiers of the 53rd Division realised it also; but they were held back, as mediocre artillery support was preferred to the armour of invisibility. Very much as happened at the Dujailah battle near Kut, it was feared that, when the day cleared, the attack would be exposed to fire unsupported. In both cases surprise and first-class cover were sacrificed for second-class support. Actually the artillery was across the wadi by 6.30 a.m.; and, if it had been pressed forward regardless of the fog, it could have helped the infantry soon after the mist had lifted. About noon Chetwode heard that the garrison of Gaza had been reinforced from two to six battalions. This, and the delay in opening the attack, made him most anxious lest night should fall with his task unfulfilled. He therefore sent a message at 1 p.m. to Chauvel, placing him in command of the Mounted Divisions, and ordering him to employ the Anzac Division to attack Gaza while the Imperial Mounted Division held off any oncoming Turkish reinforcements.

This order, despatched by overburdened signal lines, took an hour to reach its destination. It entailed a very wide redistribution of troops, and Chauvel may be held to have acted with commendable promptitude and skill in issuing, at 3.15 p.m., the necessary instructions for an attack at 4 p.m.

Chauvel Reinforced

Chetwode, however, not realising the cause of the delay, and knowing that the infantry was held up, became more and more anxious. Eventually, at

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

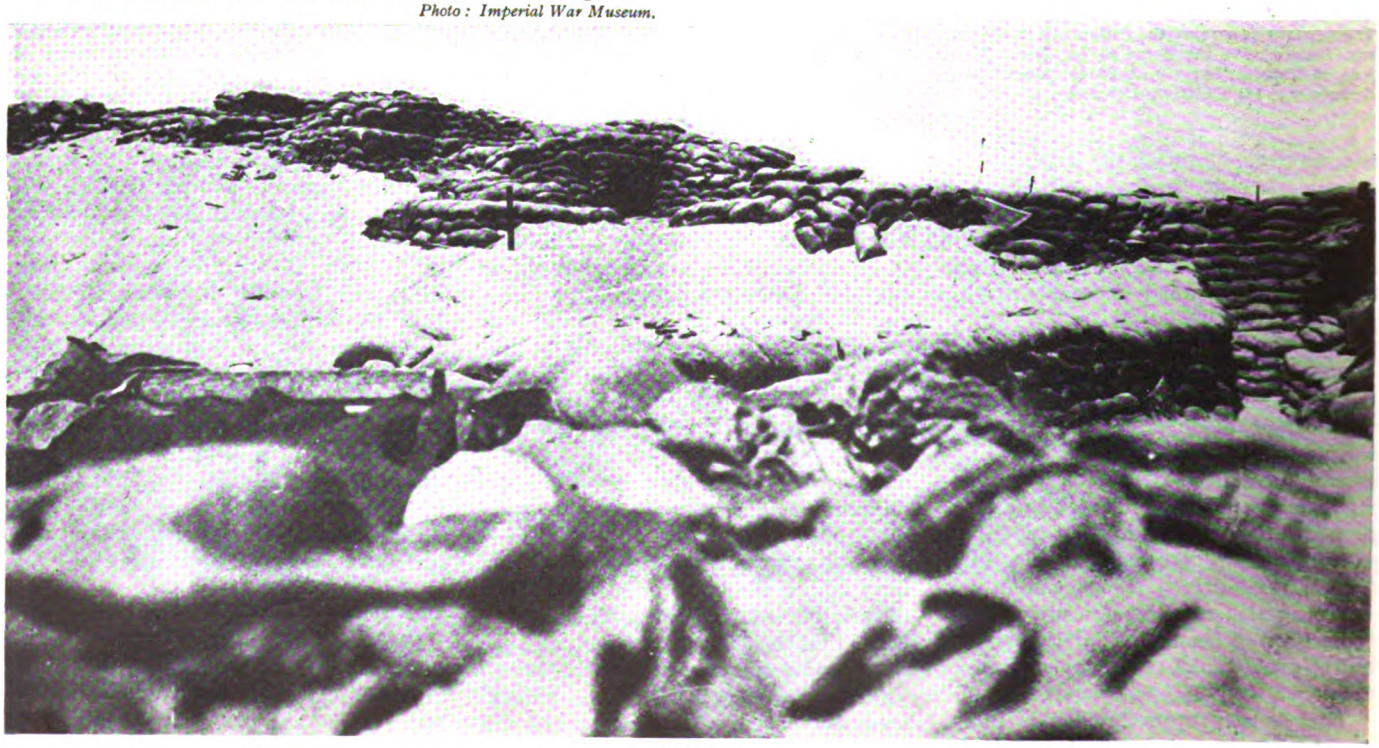
ON SAMSON'S RIDGE

British trenches, of the customary sandbag variety, on Samson's Ridge, near Gaza, during the summer of 1917. At this time the trenches were occupied by the 15th (Yeomanry) Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, 74th Division. Such were the misfortunes of the British in this region that, although the First Battle of Gaza began in March, 1917, the town was not captured until November.

IN THE FRONT LINE

A somewhat curious view of another trench on Samson's Ridge, this time held by the Norfolks, of the 54th Division. This photograph was taken on September 17th, 1917, five months after the capture of the ridge, which had occurred on April 19th. As the British advance into Palestine, famous Biblical names appear in the military annals with increasing frequency. It was from Gaza that Samson carried off the gates.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.



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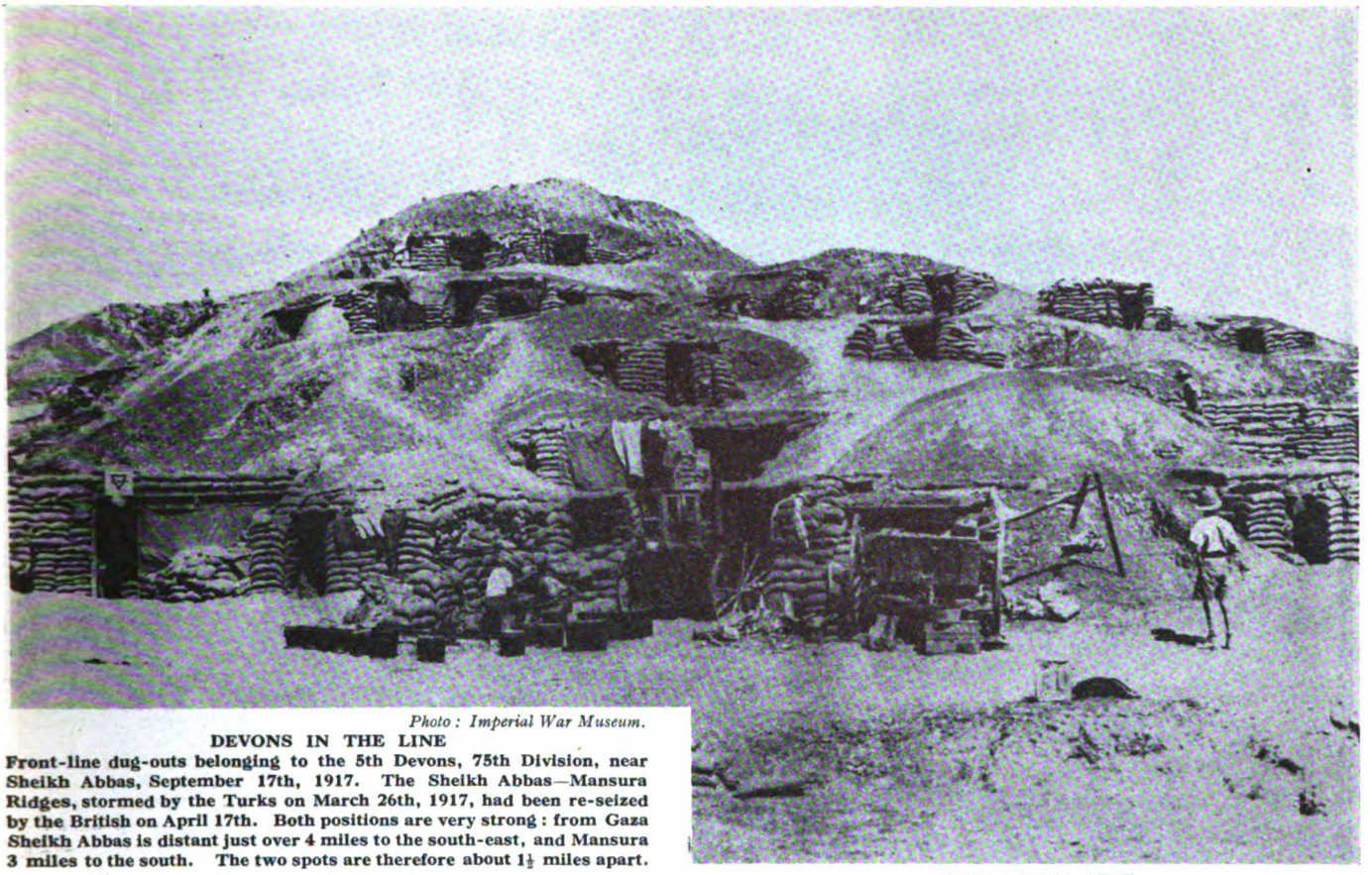

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

DEVONS IN THE LINE

Front-line dug-outs belonging to the 5th Devons, 75th Division, near Sheikh Abbas, September 17th, 1917. The Sheikh Abbas—Mansura Ridges, stormed by the Turks on March 26th, 1917, had been re-seized by the British on April 17th. Both positions are very strong : from Gaza Sheikh Abbas is distant just over 4 miles to the south-east, and Mansura 3 miles to the south. The two spots are therefore about 1½ miles apart.

GAZA FROM AFAR

A panorama of Gaza and its fertile surroundings, as seen from the hill called Ali Muntar, which crowns the Es Sire Ridge about a mile south-east of the town. Samson's Ridge runs from the coast north-eastward about 2 miles south-west of Gaza. Notice the hedge of prickly-pear in the foreground of this picture. This dense and spiny growth formed an "entanglement" many times more formidable than barbed wire, and even harder to destroy.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE HINDENBURG LINE FROM THE AIR

We here publish two photographs of exceptional merit, showing typical sections of the Hindenburg (or Siegfried) Line as it appeared to airmen. The above stretch is near Croisilles, and was photographed on April 3rd, 1917. The peculiar zigzag form of the trenches is readily apparent, but of even greater interest are the broad, mainly straight, lines. These—both the black lines and the greyer—represent belts of barbed wire; and the extraordinary intricacy of the few passage-ways is strikingly revealed. Notice especially the maze-like entrance to the first line of trenches, as well as, to right and left of it, the "trap" spaces in the outer line of wire, designed to lure attacking troops between this and the unbroken second line.

3.50 p.m., he sent a telegram suggesting that Chauvel should also use part of the Imperial Mounted Division in the attack, and informing him that three armoured-car batteries were moving to his assistance. Chauvel accordingly asked Hodgson for another brigade, and was sent the 3rd L. H. Brigade under Royston.

The 2nd L.H. Brigade, attacking between the sea and the Gaza—Jebaliye road, met with considerable resistance at the cactus-hedges on the northern and north-western fronts, and had some tough fighting there at close quarters. On their left the New Zealand Brigade moved against the north and north-east of the town, and captured two guns, which they used against defended houses on the outskirts.

A squadron of the Canterbury Regiment, turning south, entered the trenches at Ali Muntar just as they were won by the infantry of the 53rd Division. Fryer's 22nd Mounted Brigade from Beit Durdis also closed in, so that by dusk the mounted troops were almost everywhere on the outskirts of the town, and at close grips with the Turks.

In the meantime Hodgson had been redistributing his command: Pitt's 3rd Brigade to take post east of Beit Durdis, and Wiggin's 5th Brigade to fill the gap between Pitt and the Cameliers, who had been ordered to Resseim. Long before these moves were completed, however, the Turkish reinforcements had begun to make their influence felt. As the Berkshire Yeomanry were taking over the outpost line east of Beit Durdis they were driven off Hill 405 by a sudden attack from the direction of Jemmameh.

Hodgson at once ordered the 6th Brigade to retake the hill; but, unfortunately, it had just found some small pools and was taking the opportunity of watering its horses. The delay incurred enabled the Turks to secure their position on the hill; and, though Royston's Brigade returned to help the 6th, and though the Notts and Berkshire batteries, catching the Turks in enfilade, inflicted considerable losses on them, the situation at dusk was one of stalemate. The 3rd L.H. Brigade, assisted by two armoured motor batteries, which had just arrived, was on the left opposite Hill 405; then, in succession toward the right, came the 6th Brigade, the 5th Brigade, and the Cameliers.

Strength of the Turks

The enemy coming from the east were estimated at 3,000 infantry, three bat-

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teries, and two squadrons of cavalry. Later on, a further hostile column, estimated to be 7,000 strong, was observed to be approaching from Esh Sheria.

Three other detachments, of no great strength, were reported to be moving south from Deir Sneid. The squadrons watching the northern approaches to Gaza were at once reinforced; and, during the hours of darkness, the Turkish advance both from the east and north was definitely arrested.

We must now return to the 53rd Division, which we left in the act of beginning its attack on Ali Muntar. It had to traverse some 4,000 yards in the face of an enemy in a well-sited and strongly entrenched position, heavily protected by cactus hedges. Provided, however, the task were feasible, it was fully equal to it. For though it had not been in action since Gallipoli days, it had enjoyed a long spell of training in a good climate, and was thoroughly fit for battle. It was indeed a first-class division; and it received many well-merited tributes on its performance that day.

The *Australian Official History* records that the Dominion horsemen, watching the attack "as from an amphitheatre," were greatly impressed by "the splendid steadiness of the British infantry and the fine quality of its regimental leadership under the most galling conditions."

It goes on to say[1]: "The long regular lines extended in open formation soon became a good target for the enemy's guns: but they pressed on unshaken for nearly two miles. Up to this stage hardly a shot had been fired by the Turkish riflemen or machine-gunners, and it was not even certain that Ali Muntar was held in strength. But, when the infantry came within about 1,000 yards of the knoll and its cactus entanglements to the north and south, the silence of the ridge was broken by a fierce outburst of rapid rifle-fire and the sinister voice of many machine guns. Exposed on the plain . . . the British lines immediately showed many gaps, and the enemy artillery, bursting with great accuracy, added heavily to the losses. But the battalions, changing their tactics to a series of rushes, and very gallantly led by platoon and company officers, struggled gamely on under deadly punishment."

1 *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 275.

Lack of Artillery Support

Unfortunately the divisional artillery had neither the number of guns nor the

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CONSTRUCTING THE HINDENBURG LINE

In this second air-photograph of the Line, trench-construction at various stages is revealed. Running across the picture diagonally from top left to bottom right is a road bordered by trees, of which the thick black strokes are the shadows. In various directions runs the zigzag of completed trenches, while a straighter, short line near the top left-hand corner represents a new trench as yet unfinished. In the trench running along the bottom and up the right-hand side of the picture dug-outs are being constructed, this work being disclosed by the carefully strewn earth, visible as irregular patches with rather sharp outlines.

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supply of ammunition necessary for the support of an attack against such a strong position. Nor was their accuracy up to the usual standard, most of the shells falling beyond the mark.[1] The entry into action of the 271st Brigade R.F.A. at 3.30 p.m. added considerably both to the volume and efficiency of the fire; but this unit should have been available much earlier.

As the infantry closed with their objective, they ran into the thick and strongly held cactus-hedges on either flank of Ali Muntar. On the left, the 160th Brigade captured the Labyrinth—a regular maze of these hedges—at about 1.30 p.m., and the 2/10th Middlesex established themselves on a grassy hill overlooking Gaza and only half-a-mile from it; but the other battalions of the brigade suffered heavy casualties, and made but slow progress.

In the centre, the 158th Brigade had been delayed by well-sited machine guns on Green Hill. Dallas therefore ordered the 161st Brigade to capture the offending feature. Just before this could be carried out, however, the determination of the leading infantry earned its reward. "Some 40 men of the 5th Welch Fusiliers (158th Brigade) and the same number of the 5th Welch (159th Brigade) suddenly dashed forward through the machine-gun fire and effected lodgments at two points in the trenches east of Ali Muntar mosque, capturing 20 Germans and Austrians and 20 Turks. The grip upon the position was held fast with the utmost difficulty in face of local counter-attacks, but was made secure so soon as the support of the 271st Brigade R.F.A. had checked the galling fire of a nest of machine guns on Clay Hill."[1]

The 161st Brigade, deploying the 1/4th Essex on its right, the 1/5th on its left, and keeping the 1/6th in reserve, had captured its objective by 5.30 p.m. On the right the 4th Welch and the 4th Cheshires (159th Brigade) stormed Clay Hill.

Gaza at Our Mercy

By 6.30 p.m. the whole position was in our hands, and Gaza seemed at our mercy. The 159th Brigade had its right on Clay Hill, the 158th held Ali Muntar, the 161st Green Hill, and the 160th Brigade lay north of the Labyrinth. Thus the infantry had won through on the south, and the mounted troops had closed in north-west, north, and east of the ancient fortress city.

"The British troops, weary but exultant, looked forward with confidence to the surrender of the whole garrison at dawn. Meanwhile they were consolidating the position won and pushing forward patrols, which felt their way among the houses till, in the course of the night, men of the A. & N.Z. Mounted Division from the north and east met infantry of the 53rd Division in the eastern streets."[1]

[1] This was partly due to an insufficiency of telephone wire, which limited the activities of their observation officers.

[1] *Official History*, i, p. 302.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 303.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A ROAD IN GAZA

Such is the official description, but in point of fact the photograph shows a good deal more than a road—to wit, the type of house in vogue, something of Gaza's gardens, and the amount of restful greenery to be found within the town. Gaza, now called Guzzeh, was one of the five chief cities of ancient Palestine, being situated at the meeting-point of the trade-routes from Egypt and Petra (Arabia). Important from earliest times until the decline of Rome, it sank into obscurity during the Middle Ages, and has lately returned to some degree of prosperity, chiefly because of the cultivation of barley. The population, however, has dwindled rapidly since the War.

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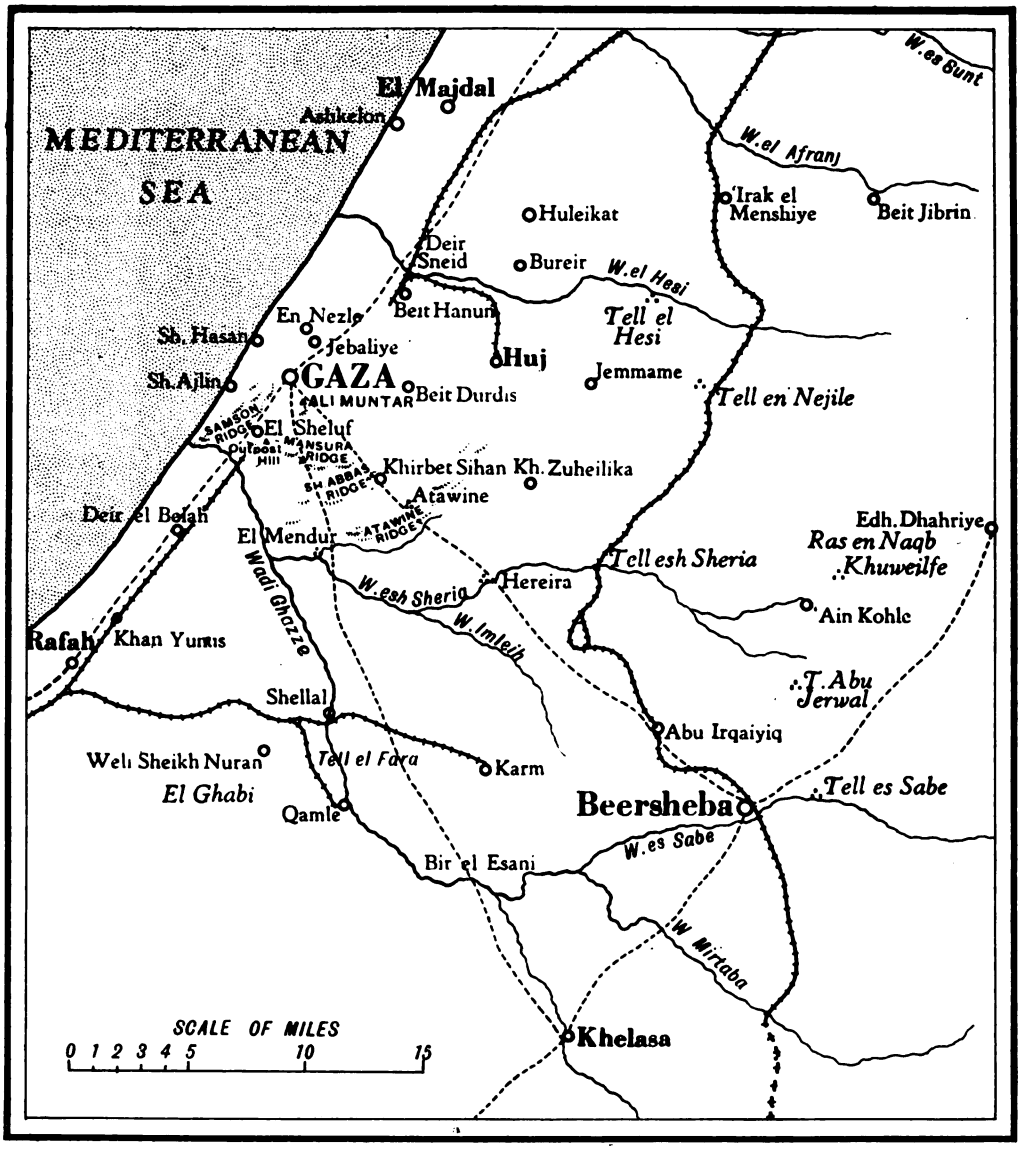
During the day Generals Dobell and Chetwode had been often in consultation at In Seirat. The slow progress of the fight, due mainly to the fog and the unexpected strength developed by the garrison of Gaza, had, in view of the possible advent of strong Turkish reinforcements, rendered them, as already noted, exceedingly anxious.

They were much perturbed, too, over the state of the horses, which had not been properly watered since midnight on the 25th, though a few pools had been found and utilised on the 26th. This anxiety was increased by a report that all the wells in Gaza except three had been blown up.

Until 5.30 p.m., the only important hostile advance signalled had been that of the 3,000 men from Jemmameh. Nevertheless, at that hour Dobell ordered the 54th Division to withdraw two miles westwards to the Burjabiye ridge, with its left one mile north of Mansura, where it would be in touch with the 53rd Division.

Sunset was at 6 p.m., and in those latitudes there is no twilight. The 53rd Division had by that hour achieved only partial success. Half the mounted troops were involved in a widely dispersed dismounted struggle, in some cases as far as four miles from their horses; while the other half was exposed to Turkish attack from north and east.



Specially drawn.

THE COUNTRY ROUND GAZA

A large-scale map showing in detail the uplands, streams, and villages associated with the Great War operations near Gaza. Some interesting theories have been put forward by post-war archaeologists concerning the site of the original city, which, it appears, stood at the mouth of the Wadi Ghazze (approximately where modern Tel el Ajjul, not shown here, now stands). This earlier Gaza dated back to immemorial times; after being an important town in the age of the Shepherd Kings, it was abandoned, probably owing to the prevalence of malaria, about 2200 B.C.

Disturbing for H.Q.

If the screen to the east were penetrated—and, after all, mounted troops have no great fire-power—heavy Turkish columns might fall during the night on the flank of the exhausted troops of the 53rd Division. Viewed in this light, the situation must have appeared most disturbing to the commanders responsible.

On the other hand, the Turks had achieved no success of any kind, except the capture, from an outpost, of Hill 405; no dangerously strong hostile columns were as yet on the map; and the battle, except in the matter of speed, was proceeding according to plan. Moreover, of the 54th Division only one brigade had been engaged; the 52nd Division, though not fully mobile, was untouched; and the 74th Division was beginning to arrive at Rafah.

However, matters always look easier of solution in after-days from an office-chair than they do in the field. With the impact of darkness it seemed that a decision must be taken; and to two stout-hearted and able commanders—as Chetwode and Dobell undoubtedly were—events appeared to demand immediate withdrawal.

Chauvel was accordingly ordered at 6.10. p.m. to break off the fight and recross the wadi. The Cameliers were placed under his orders to cover the retirement; after which they were to hold a line from the right of the 54th Division south-eastward to the wadi at Jemma.

Hardly had this order been despatched, when Dallas reported that he had captured a redoubt north-east of Ali Muntar, and that the enemy was retiring, fighting stubbornly. It is not clear when Chetwode heard that the enemy had been driven off the whole ridge, but what is certain is that he made no change in his order for the withdrawal.

He was probably—and the word must be stressed—thinking of his

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

INCONVENIENT FOR TRAFFIC

A heavily-wired street in the village of Mercatel, photographed during the spring of 1915, when the place was in German hands. Mercatel is situated 6 km. south of Arras, on the road from there to Boiry and Boyelles, and was about 2¼ km. on our side of the Hindenburg Line after the construction of that system.

horses. A British cavalry commander brought up to a tradition and in an atmosphere of superb horsemastership, and inclined, as nearly all Englishmen are, toward kindness to animals, tends to place too great a stress on the care of his horses. But horsemastership, from a military point of view, does not exist as an end in itself. It is a matter of conditioning animals for active service. Once a battle is joined for an important object, endurance—the quality at which conditioning aims—becomes the prime factor.

Photo: Keystone.

JUST A MODERN VILLAGE

Our photographer assures us that this is the self-same street in which the wire was so heavily strewn at the time of the German photograph, above. In the spring of 1915 Mercatel was, of course, far south of the British area, which extended no farther down the map than Cuinchy. It lay opposite part of the French Tenth Army, and was occupied by troops of the German *Sixth Army*.

Humanity out of Place

The commander who joins battle and yet hopes to spare horse or man is likely to be beaten, and to bring evils on his troops far greater than they would suffer in a determined bid for victory. War is a ruthless affair. The task of the gentle lies in the prevention of war, not in the exercise of kindness on the field of battle. Later actions in this campaign show a closer adherence to this principle, and also a sounder trust in the endurance of horses.

This movement was a slow and difficult affair. The darkness, the intermixture of units and their wide dispersion, the collection of wounded—all tended to make it so. It would have been still more difficult under hostile pressure; but, fortunately, the Turks made no attempt at a further advance till dawn.

At 5.30 a.m. a hostile column from the east struck the 3rd L.H. Brigade, which was acting as rearguard to the mounted troops. Just at that moment, however, the 7th Light Car Patrol arrived on the scene, and offered to take over the duty of rearguard.

The commander—a New Zealander named McKenzie—states in his diary: "This is just the kind of job we are most suited for. We ran the cars into likely positions along the ridge, and, while the brigade went by, we waited until the enemy came within range. When they were some 1,200 or 1,500 yards off, we opened fire with five machine guns.... General Royston was greatly pleased and he asked if we required a squadron to cover our retreat or to stand by in support. We said 'No,' so he wished us good luck, and galloped after his brigade. We were now on our own. It was the time of our lives. We placed the cars (never attempting to dismount the guns) in such positions that enemy parties, trying to avoid the fire of one, would come under the fire of another; but we could not stem a force of thousands. They kept advancing, and we retired from one ridge to another comfortably, while the 3rd Brigade got clear away across the wadi and was secure. We had targets of mounted men and infantry, and killed at least 150 of them."[1]

The 53rd Division

It is now time to return to the 53rd Division—the captors of Ali Muntar. At 7 p.m. Chetwode told Dallas that he

[1] *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 288.

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was withdrawing the mounted troops, and that he (Dallas) must therefore retire to make touch with the 54th Division. Dallas protested against abandoning the hard-won ground, and suggested that fresh troops should be despatched to fill the gap between the two divisions. But he was over-ruled.

Now came the reckoning for one of the many faults in staff-work which had occurred that day. Chetwode naturally supposed that his staff had informed Dallas of the move of the 54th Division from Sheikh Abbas to Mansura, and gave him his instructions under that presumption. Dallas, however, knew nothing of this, and, with his right north of the Gaza—Beersheba road, thought it impossible to retain his force in any part of the captured position if he were to join up with the 54th Division, which he believed to be at Sheikh Abbas, four miles away.

He therefore ordered a retirement at 10.30 p.m. to the line Tel el Ujul—Sheluf—Mansura—Sheikh Abbas. He had previously wired that he "would join up with the 54th Division on the western slopes of Sheikh Abbas"; but even that message did not make Chetwode's staff realise the situation. Not till midnight, when his own movement was in full swing, did Dallas discover that the 54th Division was drawing in its left to a point north of Mansura.

Had he divined this earlier, he could easily have carried out Chetwode's instructions without evacuating any large part of the hard-won ground. The retirement was completed only at 4 a.m. on the 27th, by which time the 53rd Division had been under arms for nearly 36 hours.

It was not till an hour later that Chetwode appreciated fully what had happened. He then ordered Dallas to reconnoitre the abandoned position to discover whether or not it had been reoccupied. The feelings of the divisional commander at this fresh demand on the powers of his men can be more easily imagined than described. However, orders are orders. He instructed the 160th and 161st Brigades to send forward strong patrols, and to support them if it were found possible to regain possession of the line.

Capture and Recapture

One company of the 7th Essex (161st Brigade) re-occupied Ali Muntar, and two companies of the same battalion Green Hill. On their left the other brigades had only pushed forward patrols. Soon after daylight the Turks commenced a series of counter-attacks.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE LINE NEAR CLÉRY-SUR-SOMME

Cléry stands on the north bank of the Somme, 4½ km. north-west of Péronne along the Péronne—Albert road. During the First Battle of the Somme, 1916, the village fell to the French on September 14th. In the March Retreat of 1918, the South African Brigade of the 9th Division fought gallantly in Marrières Wood, north of Cléry.

They drove the Essex men out of Ali Muntar and Green Hill, but the British reasserted themselves and recovered their positions. They were then reinforced by the 6th Essex.

In the meantime the force which had been held off the previous evening by the light cars reached Sheikh Abbas, and began shelling the rear of the advanced troops of the 53rd Division. Dallas asked that they should be driven off by a counter-attack; and Dobell had already warned the 52nd Division to undertake this operation, when the

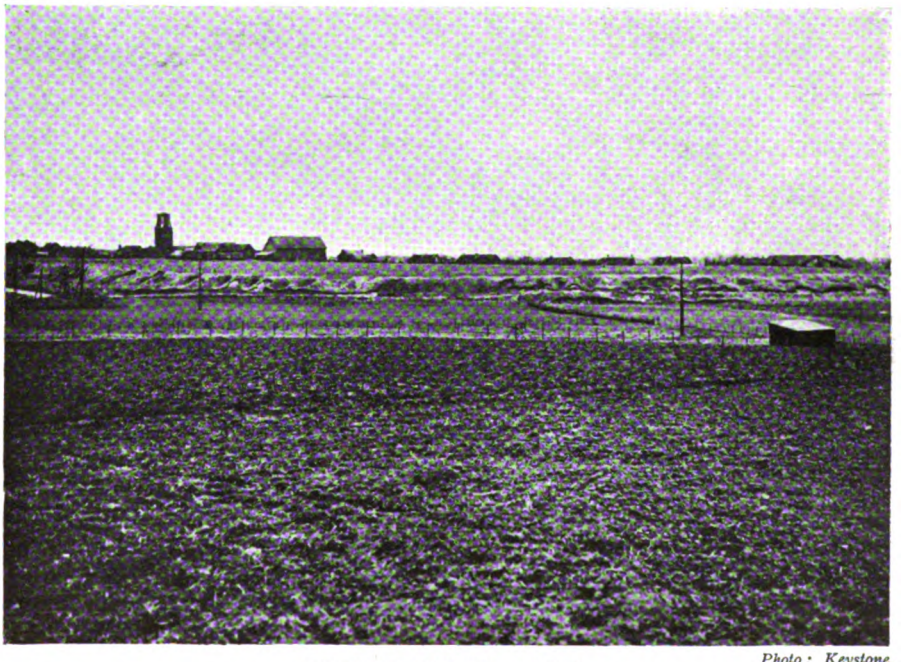

Photo: Keystone.

LOOKING TOWARD CLÉRY

On the last night of August, 1918, the 5th Australian Infantry Brigade was passed across the Somme at Feuillères (south-west of Cléry) by hastily-built bridges, and by 10.15 p.m. had taken the German trenches east of Cléry. The War photograph at the top of this page shows some of those trenches; and in the middle distance of the lower view shell-holes are plainly visible.

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Turks at 9.30 a.m. launched a really heavy assault on Ali Muntar, and flung the Essex battalions out of the captured line with heavy losses.

Dallas was then placed in charge of both the 53rd and 54th Divisions, and asked if he could hold on to the line they were then occupying. He replied that he would be unable to do so unless Sheikh Abbas were taken, for his communications across the Wadi Ghazze were completely exposed to Turkish fire from that ridge. Dobell then conferred by telephone with Sir Archibald Murray, and decided with his consent to break off the fight.

During the night of the 27th–28th the retirement was carried out without serious interruption, and by 4 a.m. on the 28th both divisions were west of the Wadi Ghazze. By this time the gallant troops of the 53rd Division were in a truly lamentable state. They had been under arms continuously for 60 hours, and had been, for the greater part of that time, marching and fighting in heavy kit. They had been just about to taste the cup of victory when it was dashed from their lips.

Their ration of water had been early expended, and they had suffered during the whole of the 27th from the fiery and exhausting blasts of the *khamsin*. Their casualties had been heavy, and the survivors dragged themselves over the wadi with parched and swollen throats, blind with fatigue and lack of sleep. The mounted troops, on the other hand, in their successful operation suffered but few casualties, and their horses were none the worse for their efforts.

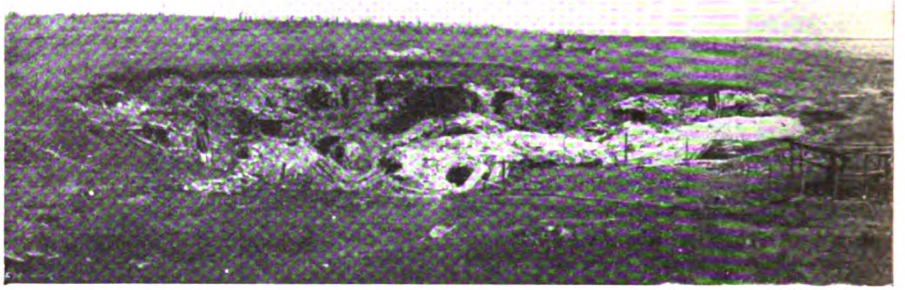

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

"THE EGG," COLOGNE FARM

Cologne Farm, near which the quarry dug-out known as "The Egg" used to stand, lies near the St. Quentin canal-tunnel, being south-west of Bony and north-east of Hargicourt. On September 29th, 1918, the American troops operating hereabouts put down a fine indirect-fire machine-gun barrage. The division concerned was the 27th (American), operating between the British 18th and 30th American Divisions. The above picture is dated September 19th, 1918.

Photo: Keystone.

ON THE SITE OF "THE EGG"

"The Egg" quarry has now hatched into the brick-farm shown in this photograph. When the Americans advanced, at the close of September, 1918, they found the British trenches of March, 1918, almost intact in this neighbourhood: a fact which gives eloquent indication of the suddenness of the German attack on March 21st, greatly helped as this had been by a thick mist. This "Egg" must, of course, not be confused with its namesake south of the Scarpe, near Wancourt.

From the Enemy's Standpoint

The British losses totalled 4,000 (mainly of the 53rd Division); those of the Turks, who were acting almost entirely on the defensive, numbered 2,500, including over 800 prisoners.

We may now examine this important battle from the point of view of the enemy, utilising Turkish and German sources of information.

The distribution of the Turkish forces during the early part of March was as follows: in command, Colonel Kress von Kressenstein; at Gaza, 3 battalions, 2 batteries; at Tel esh Sheria, 15 miles south-east of Gaza, the *16th Division*; and, at Jemmameh, 11½ miles east of Gaza, the *3rd Division*.

In the latter half of March, Kressenstein through his airmen discovered strong indications of an impending British attack on Gaza. He at once strengthened the garrison by some 4 battalions and 2 batteries, making a total of 7 battalions and 22 guns, and ordered the *53rd Division*, which Djemal had kept at Jaffa to deal with a possible British landing there, to march on Gaza.

At 8 a.m. on the 26th he heard a fairly accurate account of the British advance; and, though our cavalry had cut all telephone lines, he was able by wireless

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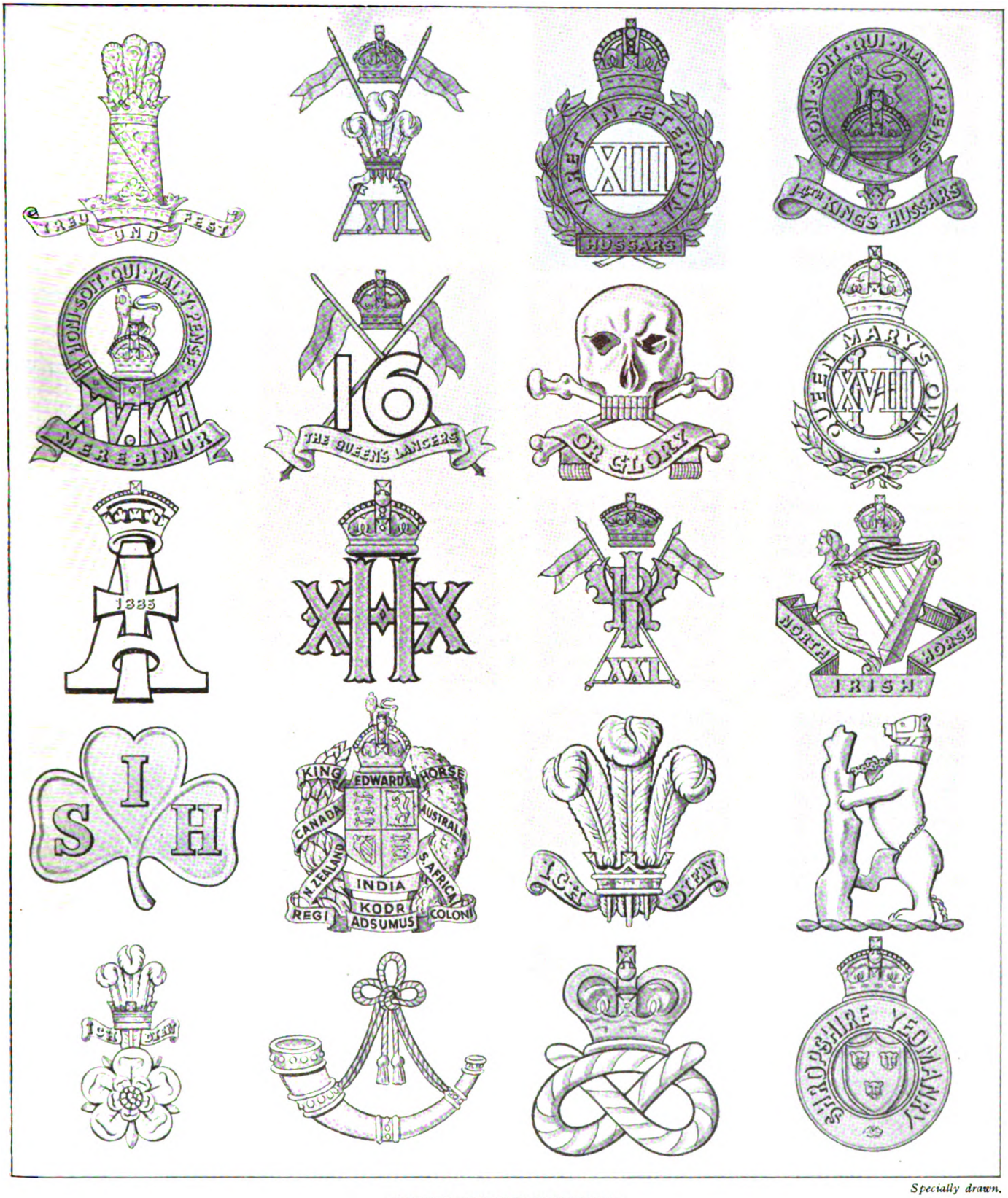

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BADGES—SECOND SELECTION

From left to right, beginning at the top: 1—11th Hussars. 2—12th Royal Lancers. 3—13th Hussars. 4—14th King's Hussars. 5—15th The King's Hussars. 6—16th The Queen's Lancers. 7—17th Lancers. 8—18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own). 9—19th Royal Hussars. 10—20th Hussars. 11—21st Lancers. 12—North Irish Horse. 13—South Irish Horse. 14—King Edward's Horse. 15—Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry. 16—Warwickshire Yeomanry. 17—Yorkshire Hussars. 18—Sherwood Rangers (Nottinghamshire Yeomanry). 19—Staffordshire Yeomanry. 20—Shropshire Yeomanry.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BIVOUACS

An encampment of the 15th Suffolk (Yeomanry) Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, 74th Division, on the Gaza Beersheba line during the summer of 1917. Beersheba—who does not remember the Old Testament's oft-repeated "from Dan to Beersheba"?—lies 25 miles south-east of Gaza, and, after figuring once or twice in the news during 1916, was captured by the British, with 1,800 prisoners, on October 31st, 1917.

to tell Major Tiller—the German commander of the garrison—to hold on to the last man.

The instructions he issued were: the leading regiment of the *53rd Division* to press its march with the expectation of reaching Gaza early on the 27th; the *3rd Division* to move directly on Gaza; the *16th Division* to strike at the British communications across the Wadi Ghazze (both divisions to attack at sight); the Beersheba group to operate by Shellal against Khan Yunis.

This action was quick and appropriate and exactly conformed with Dobell's fears: namely, that the greater part of the Turkish troops in the neighbourhood would be flung against his flank and line of communications; and it justifies to some extent his anxiety and the measures he took. According to the German account, it was due to delays "typically Turkish" that the Turkish threat was so slow in developing.

Radio Revelations

How near to victory were the British forces can be ascertained from the wireless messages which passed between Tiller and Kressenstein, and which were intercepted by the British Intelligence Branch at Cairo, the latter being in possession of the Turkish cipher. Their purport is given in the following extracts from the diary of Major Lefroy of that Branch:

"Things began to hum about mid-day as we attacked Gaza 9 a.m.... Tiller anxiously reports no sign of arrival of any reinforcements. Von Kress assures him Divs. 3 and 16 coming to his assistance. By evening Tiller reports British have entered town by N. and E., and situation very bad. Von Kress asks him concerning moral of troop-commanders and troops. Tiller replies that former refuse to face combat at dawn....

"Situation at midnight (26th–27th) very interesting. Messages from Gaza (VKA) pessimistic. Tiller asks von Kress to attack at 2 a.m. when our (the British) artillery cannot see, as his troops cannot face any further artillery fire. Kress regrets unable, but counsels him to hold on at all costs, as he will attack with Divs. 3 and 16 from Jemmameh and Sheria at 'first morning grey.' Tiller says English in the town ... and unless reinforcements sent there is very little hope. W/T personnel VKA and VQT (G.H.Q. Sheria) exchange farewell messages and arrange burn all papers, and to blow up VKA. Latter done 5.40 a.m."[1]

Unfortunately Dobell, owing to the pressure of messages on his signal communications, did not begin to receive these valuable reports till 11 p.m. on the 26th, though at least four of them had reached Rafah by 6.30 p.m., having been telephoned there ten minutes after having been deciphered at Cairo—another case of staff failure. Their earlier arrival would almost certainly have stiffened him into continuing the fight.

1 *Official History*, i, p. 310.

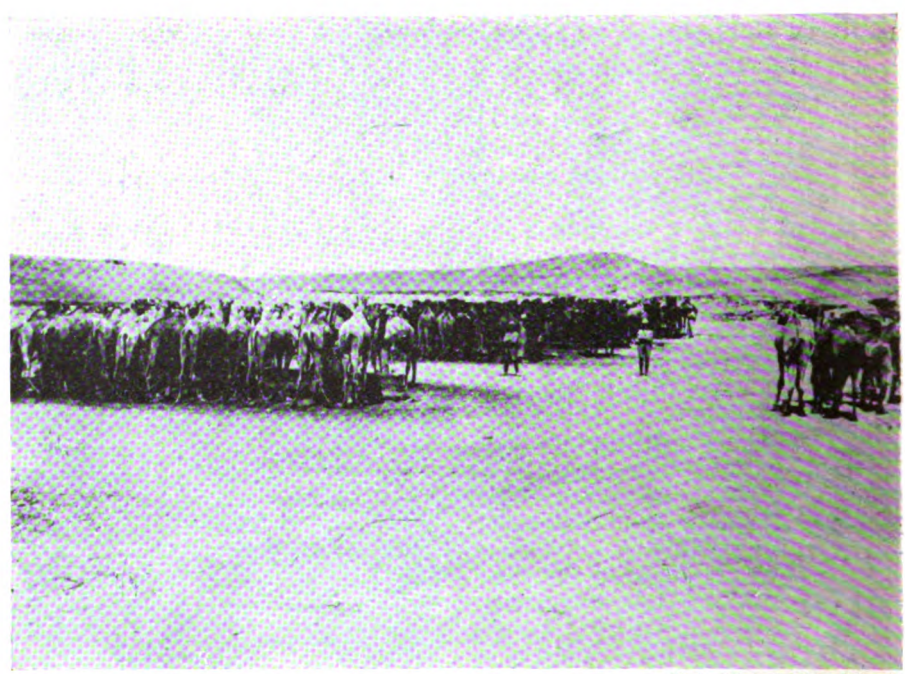

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SHIPS OF THE DESERT

Stern-view of a camel-gathering near Shellal, in the Wadi Ghuzze, during watering by the beasts' masters, the Camel Transport Corps. The Wadi Ghuzze (or Guzzeh, or Ghazze, or Gaza) is a ravine which runs roughly parallel with the Beersheba—Gaza road, although several miles west of it, and debouches into the sea, amid malarial country, 5 miles south-west of the latter town. Shellal lies 15 miles south of Gaza.

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AROUND FRECHENCOURT

Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

ROAD AND RAIL

Frechencourt stands on the right bank of the little River Hallue, a modest tributary of the Somme, which traces its course some miles westward of the Ancre. The village is 12 km. north-east of Amiens, 16 km. west-south-west of Albert, and 3 km. north of the Albert–Amiens road. Its chief usefulness during the War was as a railhead, and this photograph shows a supply-train arriving in March, 1917. There is nowadays a small British cemetery here, containing 57 graves, of which all but 8 are those of Australian casualties dating from the period April–August, 1918.

Photo: Keystone

ROAD ONLY

The number of broad-gauge locomotives in operation in France during 1916 was 62, but by October, 1917, the number had risen to more than 600; and before the Armistice even this figure was doubled. Trucks, during a corresponding period, rose in quantity from 3,840 to 52,600, while many miles of new track were laid behind our lines. During 1918, the average weekly load carried by this means in the British Army area was as much as 400,000 tons, distributed over 1,800 train-journeys. Light or narrow-gauge railways were responsible for a further 130,000 tons.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum

BOARDING LORRIES IN QUERRIEU

This place is situated 5 km. south of Frechencourt, on the Amiens–Albert road. It is 10 km. from Amiens itself, and is flanked by the Hallue. A rather large village, Querrieu in 1916 formed the H. Q. of the Fourth Army—and a very fine H. Q. this was. The map section alone was excellent. One of our contributors to Twenty Years After, who at the time was a wing adjutant in the Fourth Army's Flying Corps brigade, required some maps to smuggle through to a prisoner in Germany. Upon application, he found the section housed in two very roomy wooden huts, and equipped with a complete set of fully-detailed maps covering all Germany, for use in the event of a break-through. Such organization in the field is a comment on Rawlinson's thoroughness.

Photo : Keystone

MODERN QUERRIEU : THE MAIN STREET

Having remained behind our lines even during the German thrust of April, 1918, Querrieu provides little in the way of anecdote. There is a British cemetery on the southern outskirts of the village, which was formed and used by the divisions engaged in stemming the April, 1918, advance. The graves include 102 United Kingdom, 84 Australian, 12 German, and 1 Chinese.

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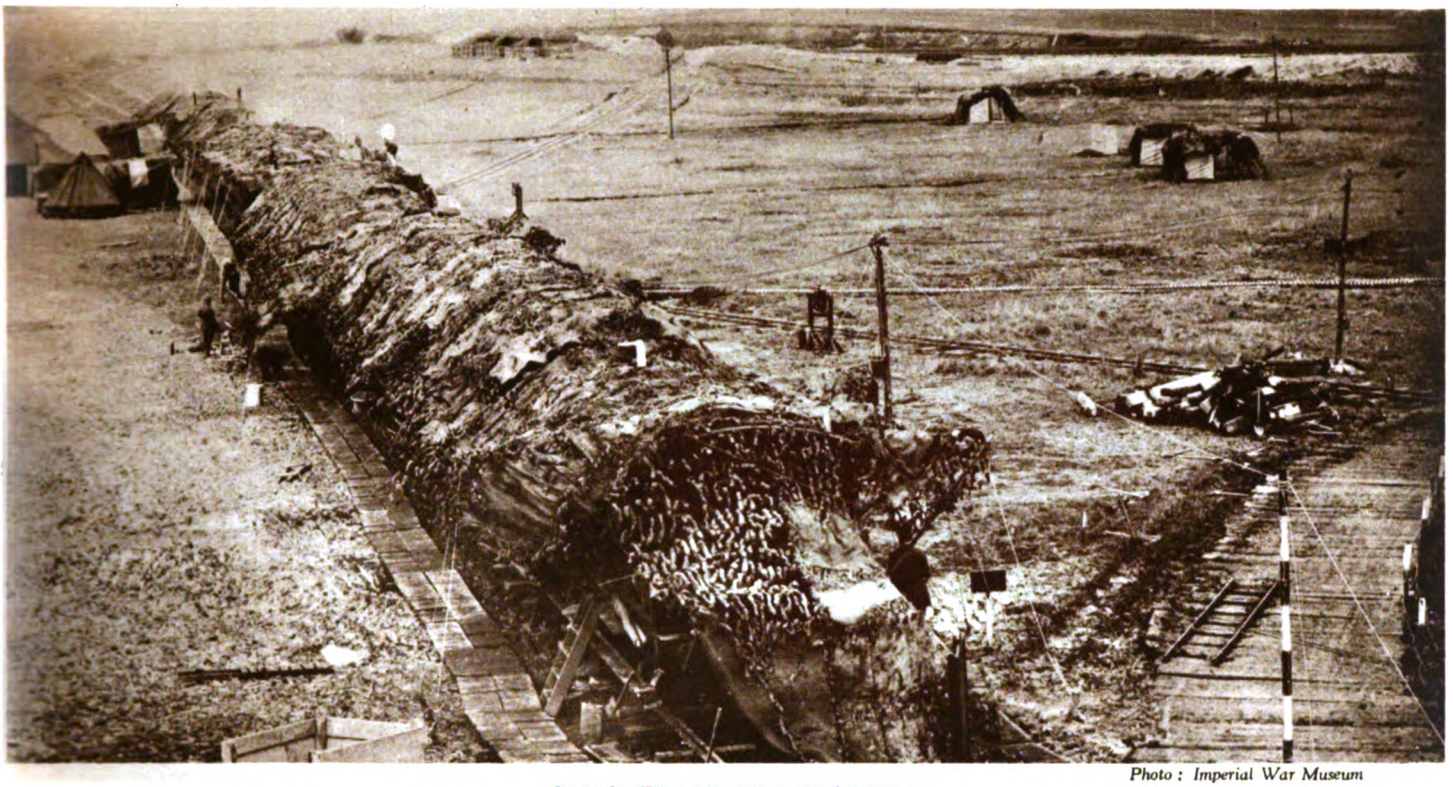

Photo : Imperial War Museum

CAMOUFLAGE AT MONTIGNY

There is more than one Montigny on the Western Front : a village of the name on the River Vesle, for example, some kilometres north-west of Rheims, was recaptured by the French on September 30th, 1918; another Montigny lies in the Nord Dept., 10 km. west of Le Cateau; while yet a third—the village with which we are here dealing—is on the Hallue, 2 km. north of Frechencourt, and 13 km. north-east of Amiens. By an odd coincidence, Montigny-sur-Hallue was also an H. Q. of the Fourth Army, when this force was occupying the area after its replacement of the Fifth Army in the spring of 1918. This photograph shows a camouflaged Army train near the H. Q. on October 17th, 1918. The precise site is Montigny Farm.

Photo : Keystone

THE COUNTRYSIDE NEAR MONTIGNY

Showing approximately the area visible in the war-time view. There is little to recommend Montigny to the ex-soldier pilgrim—or, for that matter, to any other traveller—except a tiny British section of the Communal Cemetery, containing 53 United Kingdom graves dating from the initial stages of the final advance, 1918. The Fourth Army at this time contained many formations from the Fifth.

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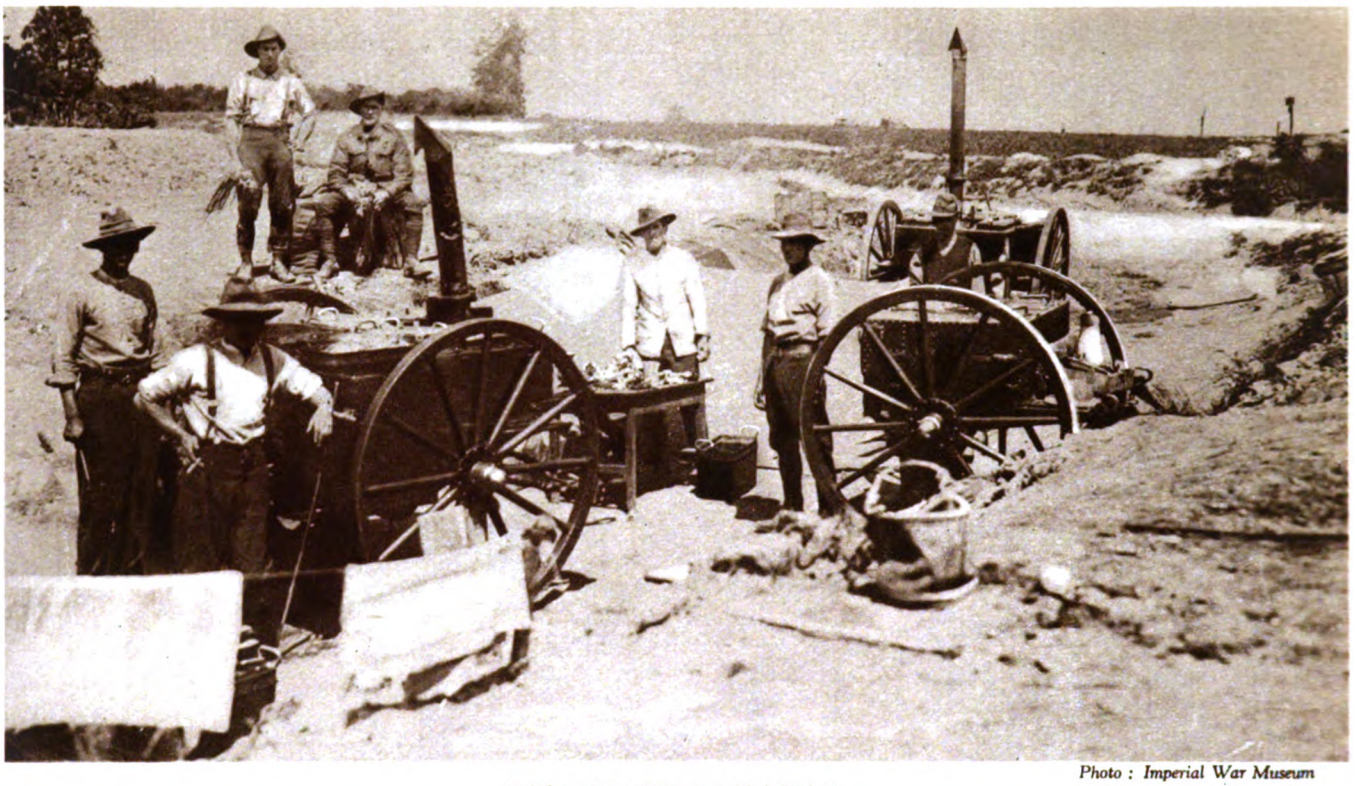

Photo : Imperial War Museum

COOKERS AND "DIGGERS"

Three field-cookers and other gear belonging to the 22nd Australian Infantry Battalion, photographed near Franvillers on May 31st, 1918. Franvillers lies further east than the other three villages illustrated in this section, being slightly nearer the Ancre than the Hallue. It is barely a kilometre north of the Amiens–Albert road, and is roughly half-way between the two towns. Many minor roads radiate from the village, severally communicating with Montigny, Contay, Warloy-Baillon, Heilly, and Bonnay—the last two places lying on the Ancre itself. A sidelight on field-cookers is afforded by the fact that in August, 1918, 860,000 lb. of dripping were recovered from them by British troops!

Photo : Keystone

A QUARRY NEAR FRANVILLERS

Franvillers was never in the line, but on March 27th, 1918, the front came within a very few miles of it—as near, that is, as Ribémont, 4½ km. away. The 35th and 3rd Australian Divisions were then nearest to the village, while the 4th Australian Division was a little way to the north-east. The one British cemetery now attached to Franvillers was used from April to August, 1918, and contains 134 Australian, 113 U.K., and 1 New Zealand dead.

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In narrating the story of the two days' fighting, a number of spectacular incidents have been omitted, to avoid blurring the clarity of the main events. They are now related separately.

Close Shave for the Airmen

As the 7th L.H. were leading the Anzac Mounted Division in their advance in the early hours of the 26th, they were fired on, just as the fog lifted, by a Turkish patrol. The Australians at once charged; and, as they did so, suddenly saw, a few hundred yards ahead, "two aeroplanes on the ground and men running round them. The German airmen and mechanics had been awakened by the firing, and had made a rush to start their engines. As the light horsemen galloped up, the machines began to "taxi" across the ground; both escaped, and the pilots, turning almost immediately, returned and machine-gunned the column." [1]

Shortly afterwards, a squadron of Worcester Yeomanry, encountering a party of Turkish infantry, charged instantly and captured 60 prisoners. The Turks, in fact, in spite of having been warned of the likelihood of an attack, were all very much surprised by the sudden appearance of our troops out of the fog.

[1] *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 267.

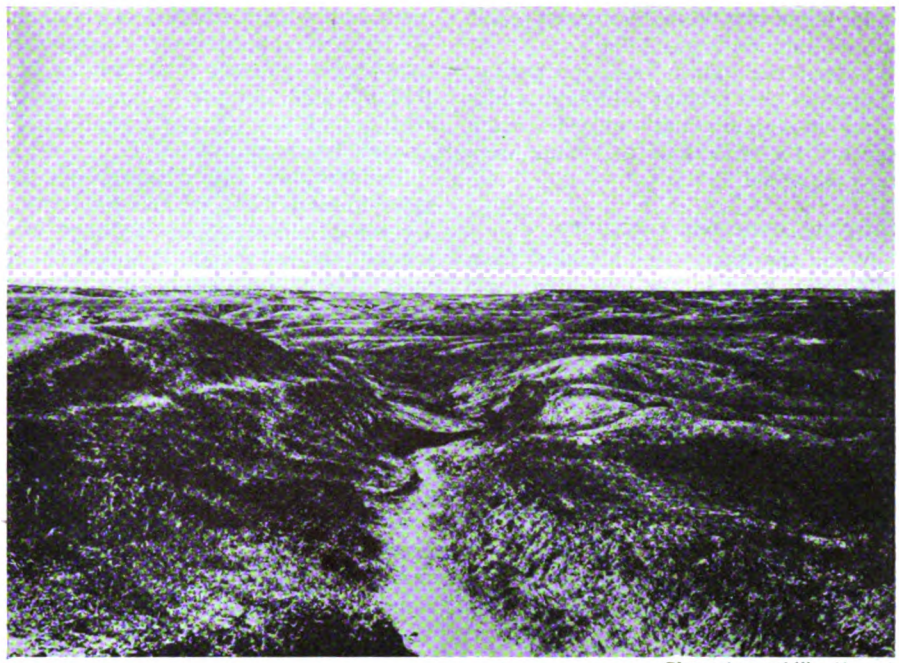

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SOUTH-EAST OF GAZA

A characteristic picture of the broken type of country to be found between Gaza and Beersheba—a bleak and treeless area wherein the action of rain and wind upon exceedingly friable soil has been responsible for a maze of irregularities. It must not be imagined, however, that this uninviting scene is typical of all Palestine, for parts of the Holy Land are rich in vegetation and pleasant in climate.

The greatest surprise of all fell to the commander of the *53rd Division*. He was travelling peacefully along in a carriage with an escort and some 30 waggons containing his belongings, on his way to take command of the garrison of Gaza, when "he was startled by a wild whoop and the noise of galloping hoofs, and in a moment was surrounded by a body of grinning, unkempt Australians on their great steaming horses. His mounted patrol drove in their spurs and fled, followed by the Australian troop-leader, shooting with his revolver, and by most of his men.

"But three or four of the light horsemen sat on their horses and, moved by the comedy of the situation, laughed aloud at the little Turkish general. Greatly flustered, the Turk—who possibly believed the crude stories of horrible cruelty inflicted by the Australians on their prisoners, which were circulated among the Ottoman troops by the crafty Germans—nervously produced a gold cigarette-case and offered a smoke to the troopers. Not to be outdone in courtesy, an impudent, harum-scarum New South Wales boy produced from his breeches-pocket a half-smoked issue 'fag' and solemnly handed it to the general.

"Later in the morning, when the distinguished prisoner was taken before Ryrie, he complained bitterly of the indignity he had suffered in being laughed at by common soldiers. Ryrie, with his ready sense of humour, was perhaps not so sympathetic as the circumstance demanded. 'Well,' he said,

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON THE PALESTINE COAST

It was unfortunate for the British invaders of the Holy Land that they were obliged to traverse some of its least hospitable regions. Here is a typical bivouac scene photographed near the coast in the southern half of the country. Among the many conquerors who had trodden these wastes, whether moving south or moving north, before the advent of the British, was Napoleon Bonaparte, who took Gaza in 1799.

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in his big hearty voice, ' you must admit it was damned funny.' "[1]

Later, the Turk, still protesting, demanded that he should be escorted by a major-general; but not with much success, for officers of that rank were fully occupied.

Sniping over the Cactuses

When the Australians attacked from the north later in the day, there was much close fighting among the cactus-hedges. " One old farrier-sergeant, who had joined in the charge, was finally cornered in a field with impassable cactus ahead of him; and while his horse nibbled at the grass, he continued sniping over the hedges from the saddle. ' Why not get off ? ' a passing officer asked him. ' I can see better from here,' he answered, and went on with his shooting." [2]

Here is a short account of the fighting for Ali Muntar. " We found a strange scene of turmoil, masses of dead and wounded of both sides, a lot more people nearly frantic with thirst and excitement, and a great mixture of units. . . . We tried to get permission to send water to the parched heroes on the heights, but Dallas would not allow camels to be sent. . . . Evacuation of wounded was also an enormous job."[1]

The first Gaza was in many ways the most ironical battle of the whole war. By sound planning, fine fighting, and magnificent endurance, it was actually won. Then the victory was thrown away by over-anxious and ill-informed commanders, and by an exhausted and therefore incapable staff.

The capture of Baghdad in the early days of the month had regained for the British in the East much of the prestige lost by the fall of Kut, and had depressed the Turks correspondingly. Now our opponents, at least in Palestine, were elated, and might be expected in the immediate future to display their finest fighting-powers in that theatre. On the other hand, our marked and peculiarly unhappy failure was unlikely, especially in the case of the 53rd Division, to endow the troops with much confidence in their leadership.

[1] *History of the 53rd Division.*

An Unparalleled Misfortune

It was an amazing coincidence, unparalleled in military history, that in three successive actions—Magdhaba, Rafah, and Gaza—the commander of the attacking force ordered the withdrawal of the assailants at the moment when the scales of victory were turning in his favour. In the two earlier battles, the action of resolute subordinates won the day in spite of orders. But in the last, and unfortunately by far the most important, of the battles, our luck did not hold, the prestige hardly and gallantly won in Sinai was lost, and Gaza remained in Turkish hands.

Immediately after the first Battle of Gaza, the military situation underwent a remarkable change. Gaza, from being a mere post to a flank, became at once a symbol of victory, and the strongest point in an entrenched line, 12 miles long, which ran from the sea along the road to Beersheba as far as Abu Hureira. It was no longer possible to seize the town by a *coup de main*. A carefully staged major operation was now necessary.

[1] *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 269.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 279.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BECELAERE'S SMITTEN TEMPLE

The hamlet of Becelaere takes us up to Belgium, for it is situated 10 km. due east of Ypres, and 3 km. north-east of Gheluvelt. During the First Battle of Ypres it was "lightly abandoned" (thus the *Official History*) by the 7th Division on October 19th, and General Haig ordered an effort to be made for its recovery on the 26th. Despite, however, a hard-fought attempt by the 2nd Division, this recovery did not materialise, and Becelaere remained in the hands of the German *XXVII Reserve Corps*. It was to continue in enemy keeping until late 1918.

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Photo: Keystone.

BECELAERE—A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Becelaere furnishes an instance of a post-war village church being not only upon the site of its predecessor, but an exact reproduction of it in style. This hamlet was fairly important as a road-junction during the War, and was also a German billeting-centre; and most of the damage accorded to it was due to our longer-range guns in the Ypres Salient, and from R.F.C. bombs. The nearest we came to recapturing Becelaere during "Third Ypres" was when we took part of the Becelaere Heights on October 4th, 1917; but the village itself was not recovered until September 28th, 1918.

The British, somewhat shaken by their failure, and still short of guns and transport, required a considerable time for preparation before they could move once more to the attack. But Murray's hand was forced. He was allowed an interval of only three weeks between battles, because Russian difficulties demanded a continuance of our pressure here.

That period was of inestimable value to the Turk. He is an indefatigable worker; and, under German supervision, the efficiency of his labour was fully developed. The trench-line he constructed was not continuous; but works were established on all commanding points, and cross-fire arranged so that the intervening ground could be swept by machine guns. The garrison of the battle-area was raised to a strength of 18,000 rifles, of which 8,500 were kept in Gaza itself.

Reinforcements of Many Kinds

On the British side everything possible was done in the time available to remedy deficiencies. The railway was advanced to Deir el Balah, and all approaches fully developed up to the eastern bank of the Wadi Ghazze, in which large reservoirs of water were established. These improvements enabled use to be made of all twelve 60-pounders available, and also of a battery of heavy howitzers which had arrived. Other reinforcements were two brigades of field artillery, eight tanks, two mounted brigades, and the remaining infantry of the 74th Division.

A consignment of 4,000 gas-shells for 4.5-inch howitzers, of which much was expected, also arrived. Twenty-five aeroplanes were available; but the Turko-German air force, owing to the superior performance of its machines, maintained at this period a decided ascendancy in the air, in spite of very gallant work on the part of our pilots.

Dobell was faced with a stiff proposition. He was very strong in mounted troops; but the natural method of employing them—against the open flank of the Turks—was denied him, because the country to the east was waterless, and he lacked transport for the carriage of water. There was no course open, therefore, but that of a direct attack against a strongly held and well-entrenched position, a course which every battle in the war showed to be unlikely to meet with success without a great preponderance of guns or tanks, which in this case did not exist.

Roughly speaking, the plan was that two divisions were to attack Ali Muntar and the ground to the south-east of it, one division was to operate by the sea-shore, and the Desert Column was to cover the right of the infantry and break

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AMID THE RUINS OF NEUVILLE-VITASSE

Neuville-Vitasse, 6 km. south-east of Arras, is a next-door neighbour of Mercatel (*see page* 1066), from which it is distant a bare 2 km. to the north-east. The two villages are situated on a spur of land, whose capture on August 25th, 1918, enabled us to extend our front of attack to the north, and secured our southern flank for an advance toward Monchy-le-Preux and Orange Hill. Neuville-Vitasse itself constituted a strong-point in the Hindenburg Line, which passed in a semicircle round the village's western side. Above is a view of two 9·2-inch howitzers, the date being April 30th, 1917.

through if opportunity offered. The operation was to be executed in two stages: the first, an advance—unlikely to be seriously opposed—to a line some two or three miles beyond the Wadi Ghazze; the second, an attack from this line after a further preparation of at least 24 hours.

Well-organised Moves

Assembly movements were completed after dusk on the 16th April. Early on the 17th, the 52nd and 54th Divisions, grouped under the command of Major-Gen. Smith as the "Eastern Attack," occupied a line from Sheikh Abbas, through Mansura to Kurd Hill on the Es Sire Ridge. The 53rd Division crossed the wadi, and prolonged the left of the 52nd to the sea by a line of outposts. These moves were exceedingly well organised, and were carried out without much opposition. The Desert Column covered the right of the infantry by demonstrations, and then withdrew across the wadi, leaving outposts beyond the eastern bank.

On the following day the Turkish positions were bombarded by land and sea, and preparations, which included the sending forward of 100,000 gallons of water, were made for the renewal of the attack.

At 5.30 a.m. on the 19th, the Monitors *M.*21 and *M.*31, the French ship *Requin*, the heavy artillery, and the 4·5-inch howitzers (firing gas-shells) bombarded the Turkish position for two hours. Then, preceded by a ten-minute burst from the 18-pounders, the infantry moved forward. The Cameliers had been added to the "Eastern Attack," which formed the main operation, and they extended its front to the south-east, with Khurbat Sihan as their objective.

On their left the 54th Division had some alarmingly open slopes to cross. The right brigade—the 163rd—led by a tank named "Nutty," after Major Nutt, the officer in command of the tank detachment, was directed against a redoubt, later known as "Tank Redoubt," about one mile north-west of Khurbat Sihan. The left of the line was held up, but the 5th Norfolks on the right, joining the left of the Cameliers, pushed gallantly on.

"Two enemy batteries of four guns each were now shooting point-blank at the tank at a range of only about 400 yards, but with miraculous luck the great vehicle rolled on, followed by the Camels and the British infantry. It was now apparently almost red-hot, and belched forth great volumes of smoke; but its heroic crew, with shells bursting all round them, and half-lost in a cloud of

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smoke and dust, drove it on through the wire entanglements, over the outer circle of trenches, until it reached the centre of the redoubt, the highest point over several square miles of country. There, hit several times in quick succession by the enemy gunners, it broke down and burst into flames.

Heroic Cameliers

" The gallant crew had nobly fulfilled their task. If they had drawn a terrific fire on the Australians and British infantry, it had served them as a lead and an inspiration. Of the hundred survivors of the Camel Companies who attempted to follow it over that last terrible 350 yards, about seventy fell before the hail of Turkish fire. But the surviving remnant, undaunted, charged shouting . . . at the Turkish trenches.

" At the same time that the thirty Australians, sustained by the superstrength which is given to men in close mortal conflict, began to use their steel, twenty gallant men of the British infantry also reached the redoubt. At that moment the position was occupied by about 600 Turks, with some German and Austrian officers. But with the Australians and British it was now an affair of wild desperation, and each man fought with the spirit of ten.

" The Turks, their nerves shattered by the amazing spectacle of the burning tank, and the fire directed upon it by their own guns, panicked and broke. Many were killed and wounded, forty were made prisoners, and the remainder, to the number of about 500, threw down their rifles, scrambled out of the trenches, and ran across the open for their main line about 600 yards away. . . .

" The splendid fighting remnant of Englishmen and Australians then hung on to the infernal knoll for upwards of two hours. . . . Pounded with shells and swept by machine-gun and rifle fire, they melted away until nearly every man had been killed or wounded. . . . By 2 o'clock the situation had become desperate " [1]—and the few remaining men were ordered to retire.

More Camelier Exploits

Further to the right, other Cameliers under the indomitable de Lancey Forth crossed the Beersheba Road and seized two hillocks, Jack and Jill, close to Khurbat Sihan. Isolated and in the air, however, they were forced to retire. Here is an incident in their charge :

" One youthful Turk was shot in the leg ; unable to race any farther, he faced us and stood with folded arms.

" ' Bayonet the cow,' yelled a Camelier.

" ' No, give the poor devil a chance,' cried another.

1 *Australian Official History*, vii, pp. 313–14.

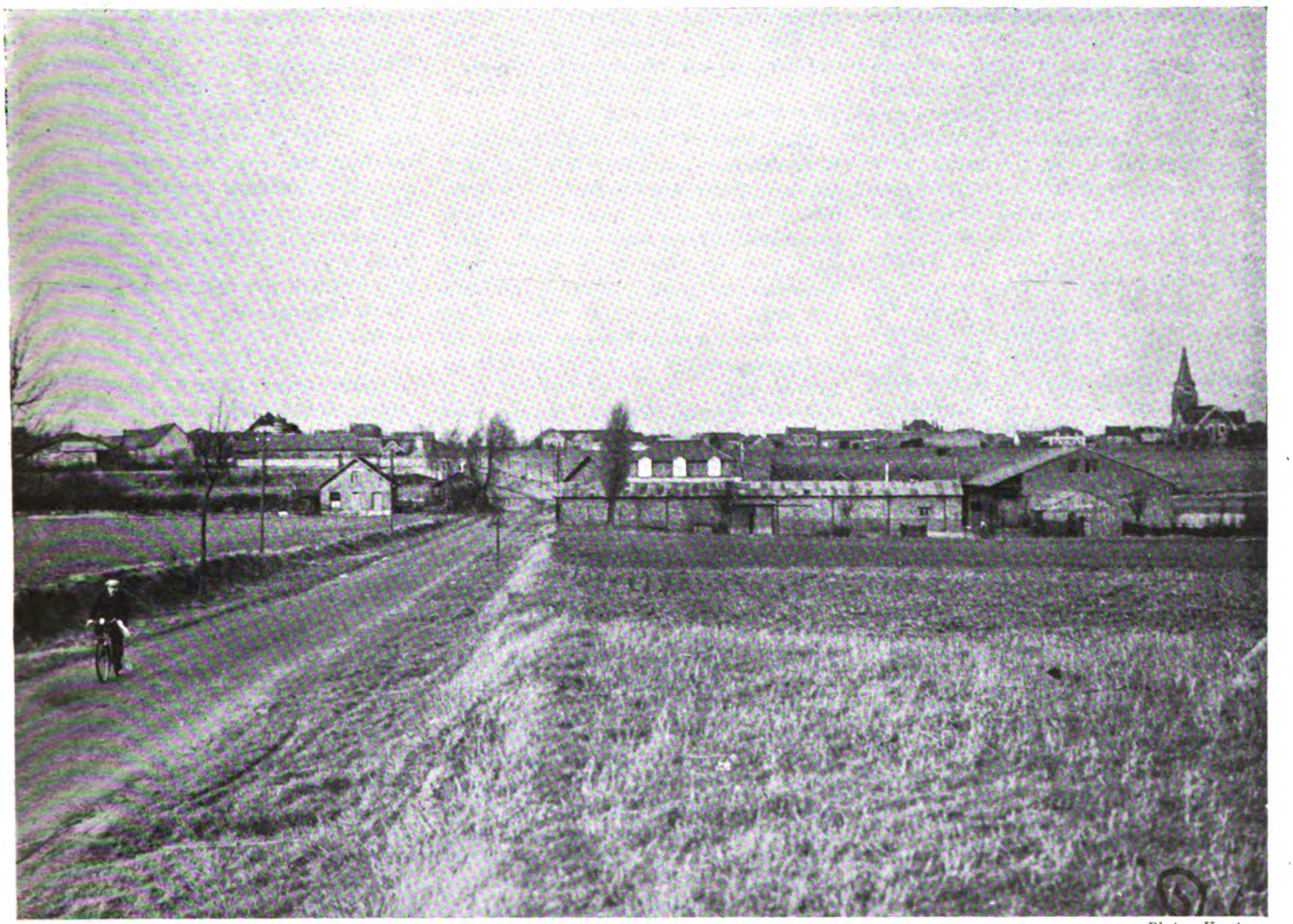

Photo : Keystone.

NEUVILLE-VITASSE NEWLY REVITALISED

A panorama of the village taken from just outside it, and showing both the church (*right*) and the ridge upon which Neuville-Vitasse and Mercatel stand. At the commencement of the Battle of Arras, Neuville-Vitasse was captured (April 9th, 1917) by the 56th (London) Division, in commemoration of which, one of the two British cemeteries now to be found there bears the name of London Cemetery. Here are buried 575 United Kingdom fallen (mostly Londoners), 19 Canadians, 12 Australians, and 3 Newfoundlanders. The other cemetery, made by units of the 33rd Division, records 86 United Kingdom burials.

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"We raced past him, and he hobbled away to the rear. Another Turk, a mere youth with his rifle clutched in his hand, struggled to a sitting position, then toppled sideways. A Camelier tore the rifle from his grip, gazed at him for a few seconds, then bent down and put a water-bottle to his lips.

"'Poor wretch. Wants to live like the rest of us.'

"The water gave the wounded man strength and he sat up. The Camelier took a field-dressing from his tunic and proceeded to bandage a wound in the Turk's head. A few yards away a young Turkish officer, shot in the leg, watched the Camelier's work of mercy. Struggling painfully to his feet, he hobbled to the Australian and patted him on the shoulder:

"'Good.'

"'Good be damned!' cried the Camelier. 'Go and bury yourself. I'm busy.'" [1]

On the left of the 54th Division, the 162nd Brigade also performed prodigies of valour, but without avail. A small party of the 4th Northamptons forced their way to the Turkish parapet and "shot down a number of the enemy at point-blank range, but this small party was eventually destroyed. The 10th London made the greatest advance of all that black day." [2]

A Resolute Signaller

Its right was held up, but the left fought its way across the Gaza—Beersheba road and penetrated the Turkish position. There, however, it was completely isolated and, after fighting valiantly, was forced to retire. Sapper Sore, of the Signal Section, on passing the road attempted to destroy the telegraph line, and, climbing the pole under heavy fire, managed to cut one wire before he was shot down.

"Undaunted, he climbed the pole again, cut a second strand, and was in the act of cutting the third and last when he was blown to pieces by a shell fired from a mountain gun a few hundred yards away." [3]

At 1 p.m. General Hare ordered up the 161st Brigade from reserve; but at 3 p.m., realising that, in view of the weakness of artillery support, to throw in more troops would be merely to add to the casualties, he ordered his division and the Camel Brigade to stand fast.

The 52nd Lowlanders had much the same tale to tell. After a short advance they were held up by heavy fire, far from their objective—not, however, without a display of epic fighting. The 5th K.O.S.B's, led by a tank, captured the lunette on Outpost Hill, but were driven out. Major Forrest—"Wattie" Forrest of the football field—then sprang forward in all the splendour of his vigorous manhood and led forward a mixed party of the 4th and 5th K.O.S.B.'s and the 5th Scots Fusiliers.

He retook the redoubt, but was killed on the parapet. A heavy concentration of gunfire, followed by a fierce counter-attack, drove the captors out. Along the rest of the front the line had by this time been stabilised; but in this quarter the Scotties were not to be denied. Three times did they take and lose the redoubt, finally to keep it in their hands. Only at dark, to straighten the line, had they to be withdrawn. Their successes had been dearly bought, for the 155th Brigade suffered 1,000 casualties out of a strength of 2,500.

In the coastal sector, where the battle raged less fiercely, the 53rd Division captured Samson's Ridge, and extended its line thence to the shore.

The Desert Column

The Desert Column had meanwhile been fulfilling its rôle. The Imperial Mounted Division advanced at 6.30 a.m. on a frontage of two miles. Some progress was made at first, but the line was soon held up, and at 2 p.m. strong Turkish counter-attacks drove the leading brigades back. Only the advent of the 6th Mounted Brigade, in the nick of time, managed to bring the enemy to a halt.

About the same time a counter-attack was launched against the Anzac Division from Hureira. This had some preliminary success, but was eventually repelled. The mounted troops were then withdrawn to a line from Dumb-bell Hill, on the edge of Sheikh Abbas ridge, to Hiseia on the Wadi Ghazze.

At 4.40 p.m. Dobell ordered the troops to dig in on the ground won. Practically, however, in spite of all the gallant fighting, this meant consolidating the line occupied on the 17th, except as regards the mild gain at Samson's Ridge. It was intended at first to renew the attack next day; but, in view of the heavy losses suffered, and of a grave shortage of ammunition, further offensive operations were indefinitely postponed.

The British casualties amounted to 6,444, of which the 54th Division suffered 2,870—the 163rd Brigade alone losing 1,828. The Turks lost a little over 2,000 men, among whom were some 200 prisoners.

The 155th Brigade of the 52nd (Lowland) Division suffered, as already stated, previous loss. This Brigade, two years earlier, had been involved in much of the fighting at Cape Helles, and in 1916 held the redoubt line at Romani. It was destined, later in 1917, greatly to distinguish itself during the fighting in the Judæan Hills, but at the Second Battle of Gaza its casualties were particularly severe. Two battalions, the 4th Royal Scots Fusiliers and the 5th King's Own Scottish Borderers, lost their Commanding Officers killed, while the loss in officers throughout the Brigades was in the region of sixty per cent. One company of the 5th Royal Scots Fusiliers emerged from the affair at Outpost Hill with only one officer remaining.

Having been so near success in the first fight for Gaza, it was difficult for Dobell and Murray, acting under pressure from home, and with their forces increased more than those of the Turks, to refuse to renew the attack. Yet their knowledge of warfare on the Western Front might have indicated the dangers of taking such action with inadequate resources. They possessed neither the guns nor the ammunition required to support a frontal attack against an entrenched position seething with machine guns; and no superiority in numbers in such a case was likely to have any effect but to multiply casualties. Hence the battle was lost before it was begun.

What Might Have Been Tried

There were, indeed, two methods which might have been tried: the one, to take advantage of darkness by means of a night-attack (but for that the troops may not have been sufficiently trained); the other, to concentrate the bulk of the artillery successively on a number of important objectives, as opposed to distributing it over the whole front of attack. "In battle, as in siege," said Napoleon, "fire should be concentrated on a single point. Once a breach is made, equilibrium is destroyed, and all that remains becomes useless."

Owing to the absence of water, there appeared to be no possibility of a wide flanking-attack, but two Turkish accounts concur in the statement that a small mounted force, of a size which might have been supplied with water, launched against the lightly-defended railway north of Beersheba, would have caused the enemy the gravest anxiety for their communications. It is extremely unlikely, however, that any such manœuvre would have seriously affected the result of the battle.

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, p. 118.
[2] *Official History*, i, pp. 338–9.
[3] *Ibid.*

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CHAPTER LXV

THE PROLOGUE TO PASSCHENDAELE

The Third Battle of Ypres, better known simply as Passchendaele, is not a pleasant memory. A long-drawn-out struggle contested under unspeakable conditions, the fighting in this sector of the Western Front endured for more than two months. In this chapter are described the events leading up to the battle, and in the three chapters that follow it the story of Passchendaele is told. As in the case of the Somme battle in the previous year, casualties were heavy; again, as on the Somme, the effect upon German morale was marked.

THE year 1917 had opened with the signs of war-weariness growing more marked among all the combatant states of Europe. The degree to which this condition was affecting the staying-power and fighting zeal of the various nations differed in proportion to the toughness and mentality of their populations. Nowhere were the effects of the malady more evident than in Russia, where, in the spring, a political upheaval brought the popular politician, Kerenski, to the head of affairs.

Kerenski's Effort in Russia

Nevertheless, the total defection of Russia was not yet an established fact. In June, Kerenski succeeded in galvanising the huge Muscovite machine into one great last effort. By dint of concentrating the more loyal units, and reconstituting the Russian armies of the centre, there seemed some hope of retrieving, in part at least, the Russian fighting-power; but even as early as March the Russian situation was causing grave anxiety to the Allied statesmen and soldiers.

Long before anything could happen in the East, however, events had been moving fast on the Western Front. The ill-fated French offensive on the Aisne had been set in motion on April 16th. As already narrated elsewhere, it ended in one of the most sanguinary reverses ever suffered by French arms. Their attacking-power was paralysed.

Moreover, the failure was also to bear fruit of another kind. After nearly three years of brave effort, the French Army was beginning to exhibit symptoms which amounted to little short of universal mutiny: not against its officers, whom the troops treated with respect, but against the Government, and the policy which had exacted such sacrifices from the troops for no apparent results. Popular opinion in the Army was deeply stirred. In the 2nd Colonial Division, on May 3rd, posters were seen stating that the men would refuse to go back to the trenches so long as their countrymen were drawing large wages in safety. On May 19th, a battalion when ordered to march dispersed and slunk off into a neighbouring forest. On succeeding days mutinies of one kind or another were of daily occurrence.

There were demands for leave. Trains steaming away from the front were rushed and occupied. Meetings and public protests were held in several camps. Farther back, the flood of returning wounded, due to a breakdown of medical arrangements, impressed the whole nation. Exaggerated stories of colossal casualties were spread abroad. Rumour was rife, and although the unrest could never be attributed to any enemy agency, there is little doubt that many highly placed personages—financiers and others—were by this time interested in setting a limit to the devastations of war.

Pétain *versus* Defeatism

In the end the French officers were successful in quelling the disaffection. In particular, General Pétain, the new commander-in-chief, excelled in calming the troops and restoring their fighting spirit. He toured the French Army for the purpose of stemming the rising tide of "defeatism." His addresses and visits were productive of much good, while he authorised an extended leave system whereby a man would see his home once in four months.

Such results, moreover, were not achieved by the application of any measure of great severity. It is true that courts martial were plentiful; yet in the end not more than 150 men were condemned to death for mutiny; and of this total the capital penalty was carried out in only twenty-three cases, the remaining sentences being commuted.

Under this beneficent regime the French Army made a remarkable recovery; but the lesson was not lost on the higher leaders, still less on the French Government. And if the authorities in France succeeded almost beyond belief in keeping from the public ear in France and Britain the deplorable condition of the French Army during the summer of 1917, the German General Staff seems to have become fully aware of the mutinies which had occurred, and of their consequences.

A most dangerous situation thus arose. General Pétain himself had already frankly informed Sir Douglas Haig of the true state of affairs; but the facts remained little known elsewhere. Even Sir Henry Wilson was so insistent, in spite of what had happened, on the necessity of the French carrying out their promised share of the coming offensive, that General Pétain obtained his removal from French General Headquarters.

As the summer wore on, it grew more and more obvious that the great scheme for joint offensive action, as sanctioned at the Conference of Chantilly on May 4th, could never be carried out. It is true that the Battle of Messines had been fought and won; but then that success had been of a limited character, and had been obtained without any help from the French. When Pétain, on June 4th, declined to commit his troops to any attack in support of Plumer's effort at Messines, the last hope of really effective French co-operation in a British offensive disappeared.

Abortive Italian Effort

The Italians had attacked the Austrians as long ago as May 12th, but with speedily diminishing success. It was not until August 20th that they managed to renew their attempt, and even then the operation, although it opened auspiciously, failed to bring any decided relief to the Allied cause; and this offensive ended once more in stalemate.

On July 1st the Russians, also, had launched their last great attack against the Austrians. Initial success of a surprising nature caused grave anxiety in Vienna and in Berlin; but as the Russian armies advanced, so all the defects of their military administration, tactics,

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTER LEAVING THE LINE

Men of the Yorkshire Regiment cleaning their rifles after coming out of the line during "Third Ypres." This photograph was taken on August 3rd, 1917, before the evil weather had set in, and during a period when our operations in Flanders seemed to be meeting with a fair measure of success. On August 3rd itself we recovered St. Julien and Infantry Hill, the former of which had been lost on the 1st; and meanwhile our forces were still flushed with the numerous successful captures made in the big attack of the 31st July.

and leadership, came to light, until they rapidly discounted the good beginning. From that moment the total collapse of the Russian State became only a matter of time.

By June the conclusion had become inevitable that the true burden of the grand Allied offensive for the year 1917 must fall upon the British; and the prospects for the future seemed to grow yet more ominous when the British Admiralty began to urge more and more strongly that the Army must clear the Germans from the Belgian coast. It was stated that the German submarine menace would never be controlled until the enemy had been driven out of his lairs on the Continental side of the narrow seas.

This aspect of the situation greatly influenced the War Cabinet in London. In late June a sitting of the Cabinet, at which Sir Douglas Haig was present, "was abruptly ended by a bombshell from the Navy, who told the Cabinet that it was 'no good thinking about what would happen next year; there would be no next year of war, for the Navy could not keep going unless the Germans were turned out of the Belgian coast.' No one really believed this amazing view, but it had sufficient weight to make the Cabinet agree to our attack going on."[1]

Lloyd George and Haig

Deeply moved by this grave turn of affairs, Haig persisted in his view that the British must carry out their part of the Chantilly programme. It was impossible to assert that he was wrong. On the other hand, the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, began to veer round to a less adventurous policy. He was all in favour of "knocking away Germany's props"—that is, of attacking Turkey, Austria, and Bulgaria before attempting any great stroke on the Western Front. He probably had more than a suspicion that France would remain virtually inactive during the remainder of the year, and feared that Great Britain might prove unequal to the strain of a single-handed offensive. Moreover, he mistrusted Haig, and his soul shrank from a repetition of the casualties of the Somme.

Accordingly a War Policy Committee was formed of Mr. Lloyd George, Lords Curzon and Milner, and General Smuts, to study the situation. This body met daily, and made frantic efforts to find a way out of the *impasse*; but not one of the "side-shows" that were studied could be regarded as a certain road to

[1] Charteris, *At G.H.Q.*, p. 233.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AN UNTIDY SCENE NEAR BOESINGHE

A British working-party, almost lost amid the debris, takes a rest where German trenches and dug-outs had once adorned the landscape, in the neighbourhood of Boesinghe, August 5th, 1917. Some of the most serious fighting encountered by this hamlet north of Ypres took place in 1915; but on July 31st, 1917, the Guards Division gained distinction by its capture of Artillery Wood, between Boesinghe and Pilckem, during the engagement known as the Battle of Pilckem Ridge. There is now a cemetery named after the wood, containing 1,295 graves.

success. Sir Douglas Haig was summoned and questioned, but still the deliberations proved inconclusive. Even Sir William Robertson, no friend of the statesmen, stated the opinion that it was "very difficult for the British authorities to know what to do for the best. One thing they could not do—remain inactive." It was in these circumstances that at long last Haig was authorised to launch the summer offensive of 1917.

The plans, already long in preparation, were ordered to be carried out. It was originally arranged to time the opening attack for July 25th, but this date was delayed—against Sir Douglas Haig's inclination—mainly owing to the fact that the French divisions, which were to attack alongside the British on the left, could not get up their artillery and ammunition in time: a postponement which in the end was to prove disastrous.

Gough's Plan

Again, the plan for the actual battle was subjected to many alterations. Sir Hubert Gough, who was to command the Fifth Army in the main attempt, was in favour of a "step-by-step" attack. In such a scheme each step would have somewhat resembled the Battle of Messines, and several days would have had to elapse between each pair of steps. As matters turned out, it proved calamitous that this plan was not scrupulously adhered to, and still more unfortunate that the Fifth Army attack did not follow directly on the success at Messines.

Such a procedure, however, was rendered quite impossible by the fact that the British artillery had neither the guns nor the men to undertake two such attacks simultaneously, or even in close sequence. As a matter of fact, the Battle of Messines had the unfortunate result of drawing the attention of the Germans to the north, and of enabling them to reinforce and strengthen their front on the sector where they fully realised the blow must fall.

Sir Douglas Haig had already consulted both his army commanders, Gough and Plumer, as to the method of attack. He heard the former's reasoning with much understanding; nevertheless, General Plumer, encouraged, perhaps, by his success at Messines, favoured a bolder and more rapid advance so as to secure the entire German trench system at one rush; and Sir Douglas Haig inclined to Plumer's view. A more rapid advance was therefore decided upon.

Nevertheless, although Haig overruled Gough in his desire for a more deliberate advance, he certainly had in mind some form of deliberate progress

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by "steps." But the lure of the final "break-through" rendered him more impatient and less cautious than Gough; so that in the end the battle was engaged with a mixed purpose in view. To some extent it was to have as its beginning a limited objective, as at Messines; on the other hand, it was to be more ambitious, and to keep the prospect of a final victory in the near foreground.

Flies in the Ointment

As a result, certain defects crept into the plan. Had it been a case of sudden attack and rapid progress, secrecy of intention and of method would have been all-important. If attrition and a very limited object were the first consideration, then the widespread knowledge of the impending stroke would matter far less: it might even induce the enemy to mass his resources where they might be attacked and destroyed by shell-fire or bombs, and that would be of great advantage in the event of a secondary stroke being attempted at another point of the front.

As things turned out, no attack of the whole war was more openly advertised. Ever since the close of the Messines fighting, on June 12th, the Germans had been fully aware of the British intentions. Haig himself became cognisant of this fact, and seems to have relied on keeping secret—if even this much were now possible—only the actual time, strength, and direction of the coming blow.

Great expectations had been centred on an important feint to be delivered against the Germans near Arras. But the necessary French co-operation did not materialise, since Pétain was strongly of opinion that his troops could not yet stand so great a strain; the Arras feint was therefore abandoned, and another, in the direction of Lille, substituted for it. This operation, however, in the end amounted to little, and failed to disturb the Germans seriously.

An important feature of the proposed attack was to be the advance of the Fourth Army, under General Rawlinson, along the sea coast, with a view to turning the enemy's flank, and also to drive the Germans from their submarine bases. The advance of this army, consisting of five divisions, was to be made after the expected capture of Passchendaele Ridge. The great battle was thus to be fought by the Second Army on the right, and by the Fifth Army in the centre; while on the left of the Fifth Army the advance was to be prolonged by six French divisions under

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN PREPARATION AT BEAUMONT-HAMEL

On page 973 we gave two photographs of Hawthorn Ridge, Beaumont-Hamel, where a British mine was exploded—with not very edifying results—during the early hours of July 1st, 1916. The "Then and Now" pair reproduced on these two pages is closely connected with the pictures on page 973, since it deals with exactly the same locality. Above is seen the 16th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment (29th Division), parading for the attack on Beaumont-Hamel on the date referred to. This attack, it will be remembered, was wholly unsuccessful.

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General Anthoine. Finally, on the extreme left, General Rawlinson's five divisions, operating in conjunction with the Navy, were to sweep along the coast.

Extreme Secrecy

Extreme secrecy was maintained as to the existence and proposed task of Rawlinson's Fourth Army—so much so that the 1st Division, when ordered to reinforce Rawlinson, was sent into a barbed-wire enclosure, and there kept isolated on the pretext, widely made public, that its troops were suffering from a virulent and contagious disease. Nevertheless, it was rumoured that the division was to be employed to disembark on the open beach behind the enemy; and in fact this was the truth.

The concentration of artillery along this coast-sector seemed to exceed all requirements of so restricted a front. Field guns lay tier upon tier; 8-inch, 60-pounders, and 9·2's were crowded together behind them. The gunners enjoyed it all. On their left the sea offered untold relief to eyes wearied by the spectacle of desolate, shell-torn ground.

But this did not mean immunity from enemy shell-fire; on the contrary, the Germans likewise had massed a huge number of guns all along the coast to cover this important area, and displayed the utmost pertinacity in raking the British lines with high-velocity ordnance of all kinds. Other discomforts were that the shifting sand, though it filled in the shell-holes, also blew into men's eyes, and—what was worse—into the guns, so that they invariably jammed; while this same sand, though it might make excellent horse lines, would promptly give the animals colic if they ate it. No: it was not all pleasure. But the proximity of the sea was wonderfully soothing; there was continuous naval activity to watch, British destroyers passing, and Germans on the horizon steaming out of Ostend harbour.

Somehow the sea brought the men nearer to their home. "The land could be smashed, the land could be blasted and torn, but the sea remained ever the same, stronger and mightier than any war, the connecting link between Hell and the peace of an English home."[1]

Enter Mustard Gas

It was at this time that mustard gas, perhaps the most dreaded of all the chemical weapons produced during the War, was first employed by the Germans. Two kilted battalions were struck down by it, the men suffering agonies. "A conference was called at divisional headquarters to decide as to the best means of dealing with this new terror, and for providing effective measures against it. It was agreed that the Highlanders must be forthwith equipped with long cotton drawers. Highland officers were asked to submit proposals as to what form these drawers should take: colour, number of buttons, and the details required with such exactitude by an Ordnance Service which can only think in terms of 'drawers, cotton, pink, legs long, buttons four, Highland regiments, for the use of.'

"All the latent genius of 'Q' was employed in the production of these pants, and the Highland Regiments could be observed later in the line, safely attired in drawers, presenting an appearance of standard lamps, their kilts resembling the shades."[1]

The Germans, fully alive to the danger

[1] Filgate, *33rd Divisional Artillery*, p. 108.

[1] Hutchison, *Warrior*, p. 196.

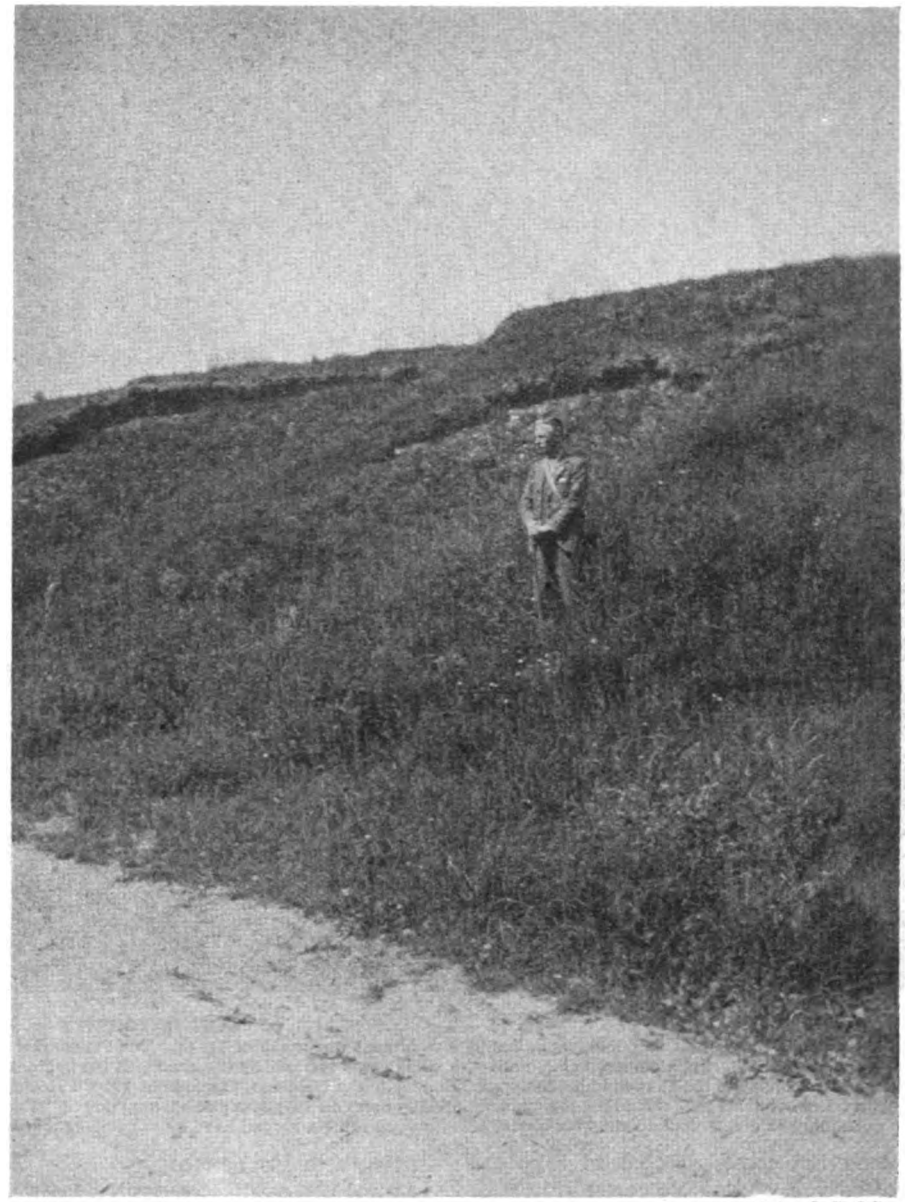

Photo: S. H. Geller.

ALONE AMID THE WAVING GRASSES

A unique circumstance connects this pair of illustrations, for the ex-serviceman seen in the "Now" view, above, is one of the Middlesex Tommies in the War-time picture opposite. Rarely can it have happened that someone who has figured in a Great War official photograph again faces the camera, on the same site, twenty years later. The dug-outs were just in rear of the British line, and were known to the troops as the "White City"; the heavily sandbagged shelter in the foreground of the War view was a first-aid post.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A PLACE OF EVIL NOTORIETY

Bixschoote, the scene of this photograph, lies 8½ km. almost due north of Ypres. The French line ran through it at one period of "First Ypres" (our allies captured it during October, 1914), until the village was retaken by the enemy at the beginning of November. Thereafter it remained in German hands, first opposite the French and subsequently opposite the Belgians, throughout 1915, 1916, and the first half of 1917. Then, the French having again taken over this part of the line, it was recaptured by them on July 31st (the opening day of "Third Ypres"). The "evil notoriety" mentioned in the heading is a reference to the War's first chlorine-gas attack, staged here by the Germans against a Moroccan division on April 22nd, 1915.

along the coast, decided to take the initiative; and at 6 a.m. on July 10th the enemy's guns started furiously bombarding the bridge-head over the River Yser. The garrison, consisting of the 1st Northamptonshires and 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps, put up a most gallant defence, but were overpowered.

It was a nasty reverse, it is true, and it left the British in possession of a greatly reduced bridge-head. In fact, the Battle of Lombartzyde, as it came to be called, exercised a greatly damping influence on the proposed operation. In the end the slow progress made by the Fifth Army against Passchendaele Ridge kept back the Fourth Army's start; and as the delay grew longer and the Passchendaele fighting more severe, the action of the Fourth Army grew more remote, until it was finally allowed to lapse altogether.

Optimistic Forecasts

It was perhaps just as well, since the German defences at this point were abnormally strong. The attack had originally been timed to take place on August 7th and 8th, when specially high and low tides could be expected. The selection of dates following so closely on the opening of the Passchendaele offensive on July 31st shows how far optimistic forecasts had induced Sir Douglas Haig to go beyond the original intention of a "limited attack" to be conducted on "step-by-step" principles.

Meanwhile the preparations for the main battle had so long been in progress that it needed but a final transfer of artillery from the Messines front to complete the preliminaries. The Fifth and Second Armies were able to employ the following number of guns: Field guns and howitzers, nearly 2,100; medium artillery, 720; heavy guns and howitzers, 280. The Fifth Army had one piece per 6 yards of front,[1] the French no less than one per 2½ yards of front.

The artillery tactics were much the same as at Messines: counter-battery work was regarded as all-important, and reserved for the last stages of the bombardment. But the visibility and facilities for observation were not nearly so good as at Messines, while the German artillery had increased greatly in power, even though now outweighed in the proportion of more than two to one; while a serious drawback to the British position was the total lack of concealment to cover the movement of the guns.

The real handicap of the artillery, however, lay in the fact that, when

1 At Messines there had been one piece per 7 yards of front.

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the first advance began, the British guns were firing from inside a salient, whereas the Germans had the advantage of being able to fire from a re-entrant, with consequent facility in the concentration of fire.

Another obstacle to British progress which entirely neutralised our superiority in guns was the number of concrete works which the Germans had erected along the entire front of the salient. Pill-boxes had been built at every threatened point, while ruined farms and buildings had been reinforced with concrete and steel until they were well-nigh impervious to anything but the direct hit of a medium or heavy high-explosive shell.

The Pill-box Problem

The capture of such works had already been a feature of the Battle of Messines, but it was to constitute one of the main factors in the coming operations. As an Irishman described the warfare which developed, " In the ould days a trench was a trench, ye'll understand, an' something to lay hould upon. Third Ypres was fallin' into nothin' and then findin' 'twas two pill-boxes an' a fort on your flank."[1] Consequently, bombing and " mopping-up " became almost the main feature of any attack.

Artillery support for the assault on a pill-box was most difficult to obtain. How was the artillery fire to be directed on to it ? The position of these structures was shown on no map ; standing as they did in a featureless sea of mud, it was extremely difficult even to range on them. Built of concrete, often 6 feet thick and divided into bomb-proof compartments with solid steel doors, a pill-box might easily survive the barrage and succumb only to methodical attack by bombing.

The additional troops—artillery and others—required for the assault were now in the salient. Among them were a few who, having fought at " Second Wipers " in 1915, were back for the first time since the fearful struggle which followed the German gas attack of April 22nd, 1915. They found the country greatly changed. Everywhere signs of destruction had spread and multiplied. From the heights of the Scherpenberg " the panorama of war " of the whole salient was spread out :

" Far away to the left the yellow sands of the coastline and the white break of the waves. From here full across the landscape ran a brown smudge as if the artist had deliberately drawn a dirty finger over his finished canvas."

But if the country showed these deep scars of war, the people had changed too. The survivors of 1915 could recognise the old, familiar billets, but somehow they seemed different. They looked more shabby, too. The estaminets were the same, but the girls who served there were two years older, and had become disconcertingly sophisticated ; while their fluency in the English tongue flabbergasted some of the old *habitués* of 1915.

A Comely Damsel's Retort

When a veteran lieutenant went up to a once familiar inn and saluted a comely damsel whom he recognised as the former serving maid with a " *Bon jour, ma petite !* " and patted her cheek, he was staggered when she recoiled, not recognising the erstwhile comely corporal, and spat out at him, " Garn, fat face ! "

Photo : G. T. Watson.

TRYING TO FORGET ITS ILL-FAME

A fair amount of fighting took place in the Bixschoote neighbourhood after the French had re-established themselves in the village, British troops also being concerned. In 1918 there was further activity hereabouts, the Belgians capturing 700 prisoners on April 17th. As already stated in the caption on page 1076, the first gas attack had been made on this part of the front on April 22nd, 1915. Modern Bixschoote presents a very different appearance from that of the ruins seen opposite, but is without a British cemetery.

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *The Irish Guards*, p. 230.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A MIRY SCENE NEAR PILCKEM

Men of the Lancashire Fusiliers negotiating a duckboard path, with more duckboards on their shoulders, near Pilckem, October 10th, 1917. The famous Pilckem Ridge ran north-west to south-east through the hamlet, and the latter was captured, on July 31st, 1917, by Welsh troops of the 38th Division, who demolished a Prussian Guard battalion in the process.

The shops were the same: the wares the same, but double the price. Shanties galore had sprung up along the roadside, bearing such inscriptions as "Cafee," "Egs," "Cocolate." That the population was trying to make a little money was pretty evident. But much of the old friendliness was gone. Some of the older people seemed as though they resented the fact that the British had not succeeded in clearing the hated German from their doors. Yes, things had changed. . . .

A new station had sprung up where the troops detrained. Was it a joke of the railway authorities that it should have been called HOPOUTRE? As an old soldier remarked, "Hop out, ye–ss! that's all very fine, but I'd rather hop in any old time, along here!" A new road existed, too, and that dreaded passage through the wreck of Ypres was no longer inevitable. This much was to the good. But the Germans had new artillery methods, and, instead of confining their attention to the front, now had a nasty habit of raking all roads and back-areas with their high-velocity guns: a circumstance which came as a shock to many of the supply and transport folk who had enjoyed a comparative immunity from such attentions on the Somme a year earlier.

Among the troops in general there was not the feeling of exaltation and of confidence in the future which had been theirs on the opening day of the Somme fighting thirteen months earlier; that, too, had changed. But of the determination and fitness of the men there was not a doubt. Experience had taught many a lesson. The sanguinary losses of not a few hard-fought actions had left their mark on the survivors; and the newly joined recruit had heard enough to know that enthusiasm and bravery would not suffice to carry him through the coming battle unscathed. As one veteran wrote home:

"No Longer Write of Victory"

"I am certainly not the same as I was a year ago. I can no longer write home to you, as I once did, of victory. We just live for the day and think of little else but of our job, the next show, and our billets and rations. I may be a better soldier and know my job better than I did, but I dare not think of anything beyond that. After all, just imagine my life out here: the chances of surviving the next battle for us platoon commanders is just about 4 to 1 against!"

So the days went by, one just like another. Yet there was a hardening of character, an education of self, that few realised. The best were being refined in that furnace. Devotion to his pals was transforming a weary and selfish brute into a warm-hearted friend. "The Great War formed a comradeship that will never be known again by men of to-day": thus says a survivor.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

ON PILCKEM'S CELEBRATED RIDGE

Pilckem Ridge after two decades of peace presents a not unattractive appearance; this photograph shows, in the foreground, part of a field of tobacco-plants, while in the background young poplars are delicately soaring. Pilckem hamlet—it can scarcely be called a village—lies scattered about a crossing of two country lanes (the crossing may be seen in the photograph some 5 km. almost due north of Ypres.

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Nevertheless, if the men of 1917 were less talkative, less likely to think of the future, less fanciful and more fatalistic in their outlook than of yore, their good humour remained at bottom unquenchable. One could still mark, just as a year earlier, the outbursts of rough wit. Near a gas gong, for instance, could be seen chalked up in coarse letters such a notice as :

TO H.M. TROOPS.
If the German gas you smell,
Bang this gong like blinking Hell.
Put on your helmet,
Load your gun,
And prepare to meet
The b—— Hun ! [1]

The true bombardment began on July 15th, and should have lasted ten days ; but, owing to the postponement of zero day, it was extended until the 31st. Some 4½ tons of shell per yard of front were fired (at Messines the amount had well exceeded 5 tons per yard). The effects were certainly good, although far too many pill-boxes remained untouched for the subsequent attack to prosper as it had done at Messines.

3 Frenchmen Take 19 Prisoners

The results of the fire were particularly noticeable on the left of the attack. On July 23rd and 25th, French gunners found that they could walk over the German trench-line without drawing fire. Once three of them actually brought in 19 prisoners. Before the 31st, the Allied line could be moved forward some 600 yards on this flank.

But though the British artillery could work havoc among the German trenches, German counter-battery work remained good. Casualties, even among gunners well to the rear, were becoming severe. Lastly, as the weather improved, the Germans succeeded in sending a few aeroplanes across the lines, such enterprises being invariably followed by effective enemy artillery fire.

There remained the problem of the weather. " All the preparations are, I think, as good and as well advanced as those of our other two big attacks this year, and if we get as much success in this as in the others, great things will happen. My one fear is the weather. We have had most carefully prepared statistics of previous years—there are records of eighty years to refer to—and I do not think that we can hope for more than a fortnight, or at the best, three weeks of really fine weather." [2]

[1] Fielding, *Letters to my Wife*, p. 157.
[2] Charteris, *At G.H.Q.*, p. 236.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

UPHEAVAL ON HILL 60, 1917

An ungodly sight was Hill 60 on August 17th, 1917, the date on which this photograph was taken. The period, however, was before the season of torrential rain which so greatly hampered the later operations in the third Ypres battle. The craters visible in the picture are the work of the two mines blown below the hill as part of the prelude to the Battle of Messines, June 7th, 1917.

The weather problem was indeed an anxious one. Nor was it one that could be ignored. Not for nothing has reference been made to " the wet Flanders plain."

The latter part of July was certainly dry and mostly fine. It was gambling with fortune to delay zero day beyond the 25th—and the gamble was to fail.

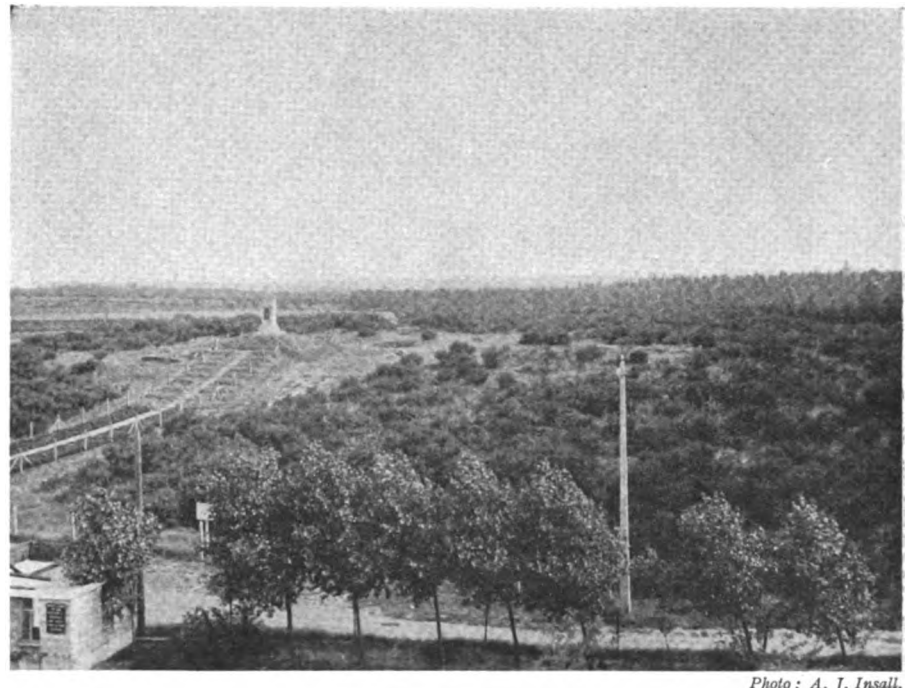

Photo : A. J. Insall.

PANORAMA FROM HILL 60 TO-DAY

This photograph was taken from the iron observation-tower now crowning the hill, and shows the country approximately southward—the expanse including Zandvoorde, Houthem, and Hollebeke, with all that lies between. Hill 60 has suffered badly, from the point of view of those who once fought there, as a result of being made a " show-place " ; for, unlike some of the other preserved battlefields, it seems to have attracted mainly the worst type of tourist.

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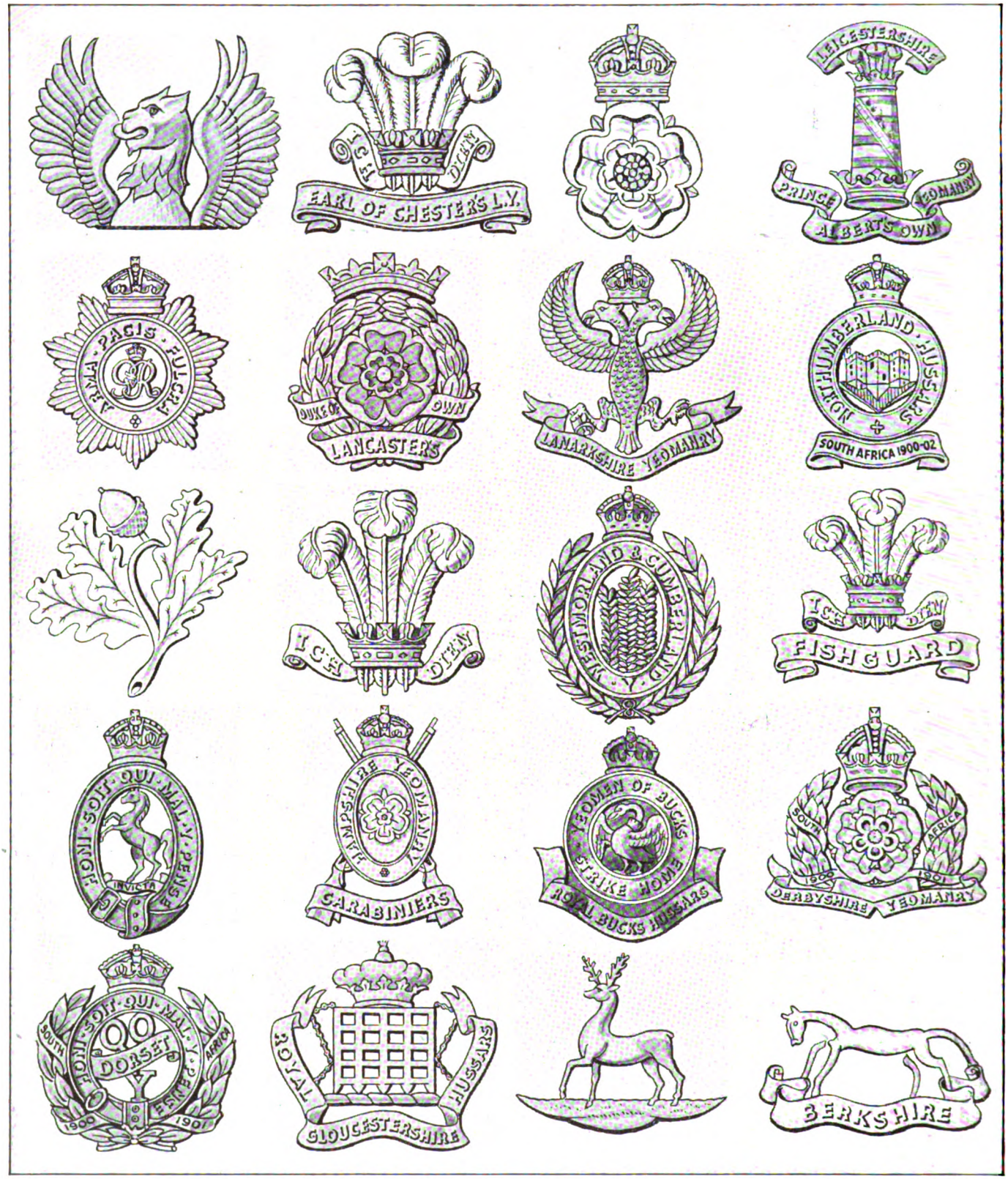

Specially drawn.

BADGES—THIRD SELECTION

From left to right, the top row first, the badges are those of: 1—Ayrshire Yeomanry. 2—Cheshire Yeomanry. 3—Yorkshire Dragoons. 4—Leicestershire Yeomanry. 5—North Somerset Yeomanry. 6—Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry. 7—Lanarkshire Yeomanry. 8—Northumberland Hussars. 9—South Notts Hussars. 10—Denbighshire Yeomanry. 11—Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry. 12—Pembrokeshire Yeomanry. 13—Royal East Kent Yeomanry. 14—Hampshire Yeomanry. 15—Royal Bucks Hussars. 16—Derbyshire Yeomanry. 17—Dorset Yeomanry. 18—Royal Gloucestershire Hussars. 19—Hertfordshire Yeomanry. 20—Berkshire Yeomanry.

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CHAPTER LXVI

THE HAMMERING-MATCH OF "THIRD YPRES"

The Third Battle of Ypres began on July 31st, 1917, with an attack upon Pilckem Ridge, and from the outset the advancing troops were everywhere hampered by mud. The weather had broken, and soon the low Flanders plain became little better than a quagmire. For man, beast, and machine the ground was in many places impassable, and many of the casualties were directly attributable to this factor.

THE fighting which lasted from July 31st, 1917, until about the middle of November, is usually known as the "Third Battle of Ypres," or else "Passchendaele." To understand the full meaning of that protracted struggle, it is as well to follow the lead of the Committee which apportioned names to the battles of the World War. If this be done, we can split up "Third Ypres" into the following battles:

The Battles of "Third Ypres"

1. Pilckem Ridge: July 31st—August 2nd.
2. Langemarck: August 16th—18th.
3. The Menin Road: September 20th—25th.
4. Polygon Wood: September 26th—October 3rd.
5. Broodseinde: October 4th.
6. Poelcapelle: October 9th.
7. First Passchendaele: October 12th.
8. Second Passchendaele: October 26th—November 10th.

Nearly each one of these was a distinct operation, fought with a definite purpose. To say this does not mean that no fighting took place in between these outstanding actions: very far from it. But such a separation of the battles conveys a clearer idea of the whole of "Third Ypres," or "Passchendaele," than the vague designation of the autumn fighting of 1917 by one title.

The Battle of Pilckem Ridge was the first act of the great drama, and the direct sequence of the events already described.

At 3.50 a.m., on July 31st, the Fifth Army stepped out to the attack. The four corps of the army advanced, from right to left, as follows: II, XIX, XVIII, XIV; the divisions, similarly, thus: 24th, 30th, 8th, 15th, 55th, 39th, 51st, 38th, Guards. To the left of the Guards, the French sent forward two divisions, while over on the right the Second Army advanced in support of the Fifth Army's right wing.

The operation was to proceed in three stages, the limits to be reached by the attacking troops at the end of each being designated the Blue Line, the Black Line, and the Green Line. The first and second stages involved an advance of about 1,000 yards apiece; the third varied in depth from 1,500 yards, on the right and centre, down to 1,000 yards on the left.

From the very outset the Fifth Army encountered its worst enemy, MUD. On the right the difficulty caused by this obstacle, together with the broken trees in this once wooded zone, seriously hampered movement; while, owing to the formation of the ground, it was, curiously enough, found that the higher levels were, in places, even worse than the lower-lying depressions. The II Corps, consequently, made slower progress than the rest of the line; yet it was on this flank, the right, that a rapid advance was by far the more necessary.

Blue Line Captured

The net results of the day were that the II Corps captured the Blue Line, except for about a quarter-of-a-mile on the extreme right. The 24th and 30th Divisions, hindered by bad ground and many pill-boxes, did not take their second objective. The 8th Division did gain both its objectives, but was then left in the air owing to the failure of the other two divisions. To the left of the II, the XIX Corps captured both objectives, and then started to attack the Green Line.

Here it was heavily counter-attacked, and also suffered at the hands of low-flying aeroplanes, this being the first occasion on which the Germans made use of aircraft in this fashion to support their infantry. Subsequently the right of the XIX Corps came back to keep touch with the II Corps. The 55th Division, on the left of the XIX Corps, though suffering heavily, did better, one of its detachments advancing well beyond the Green Line.[1]

The XVIII Corps advanced beyond the first two objectives. Its right division went well beyond the Steenbeek brook, where it suffered somewhat from counter-attacks and withdrew; but the left division remained on its gains. The XIV Corps seems to have had an easier task. In fact, it may be said that the enemy's resistance grew rapidly weaker as the attack extended to the left. The French made equally good headway.

Although, in contrast with the opening day of the Somme thirteen months earlier, the results might seem more promising, this day marked the beginning of a long-protracted struggle which brought in its train not only much bloodshed and endless misery to the troops, but great disappointment and discord in high places.

Bad Weather for Airmen

"The chief peculiarity of the fighting on the 31st was, of course, that owing to the weather we could make practically no use of our aircraft. This was most disappointing. The Flying Corps had worked for weeks for superiority in the air, and they had obtained it, only to find that owing to the bad visibility their efforts were in vain.... In spite of this, the attack on the left, on the centre and on the right centre was a complete success up to the ultimate objectives. It was, in fact, too much of a success; the troops obtained their objectives without much loss, and almost in advance of time. In consequence, they attempted to move forward to fresh objectives and in doing so suffered a very considerable loss of life on the extreme right. The full result of the lack of aircraft visibility was felt at once. The rain had made the ground heavy.... The artillery

[1] This fine division of West Lancashire Territorials was to cover itself with glory in April, 1918.

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barrage went on at the normal rate allowed on these attacks, but the ground was so heavy that the infantry either could not, or did not (I am not sure which), keep close under it; the consequence was that some machine guns, reinforced by concrete emplacements, came to life again after the barrage had passed." [1]

To the right of the Fifth Army, the Second Army, also, was successful in pushing forward its left wing. Here the X Corps sent forward the 41st Division, and the IX Corps the 19th and 37th Divisions, with the object of seizing the Blue Line. The task was achieved, though not without some casualties; so that by August 3rd the Second Army can be said to have fulfilled its mission—which, in some respects, was the more difficult and thankless part of the attack.

[1] Charteris, *At G.H.Q.*, p. 238.

On the same day, too, the Second Army carried out the operation known as the "Windmill feint" to the north-west of Lille, very much on the old Messines battlefield. This was designed to take the Warneton Line, to which the Germans had retreated on June 12th; and the attack, carried out mainly by the 3rd Australian Division, was successful in capturing a line of German strong-points. The fighting was a trifle costly, but although it did not deceive the Germans as to the direction of our main effort, it certainly pinned down some of their reserves.

—And Then the Rain Came

At 4 p.m., on the 31st, the rain, which had been threatening all day, began to fall. From showers it soon developed into torrents; and with it the fairest hopes of what was in fact a noteworthy day's fighting wilted away. As the rain held on, so the ground, already soft, and now broken up by the bombardment, grew worse and worse. The outlook went from bad to desperate, and still the catastrophic floodgates of heaven stayed open. The effect on the battle is best given in the words, written at the moment, of the Head of the Intelligence Section at G.H.Q.:

"All my fears about the weather have been realised. It has killed this attack. Every day's delay tells against us. We lose, hour by hour, the advantage of attack. The Germans can reorganise and reinforce. We can do nothing but wait. Even if the weather were to clear now, it will take days for the ground to harden, if indeed it ever can, before the winter frost.... Every brook is swollen and the ground is a quagmire....

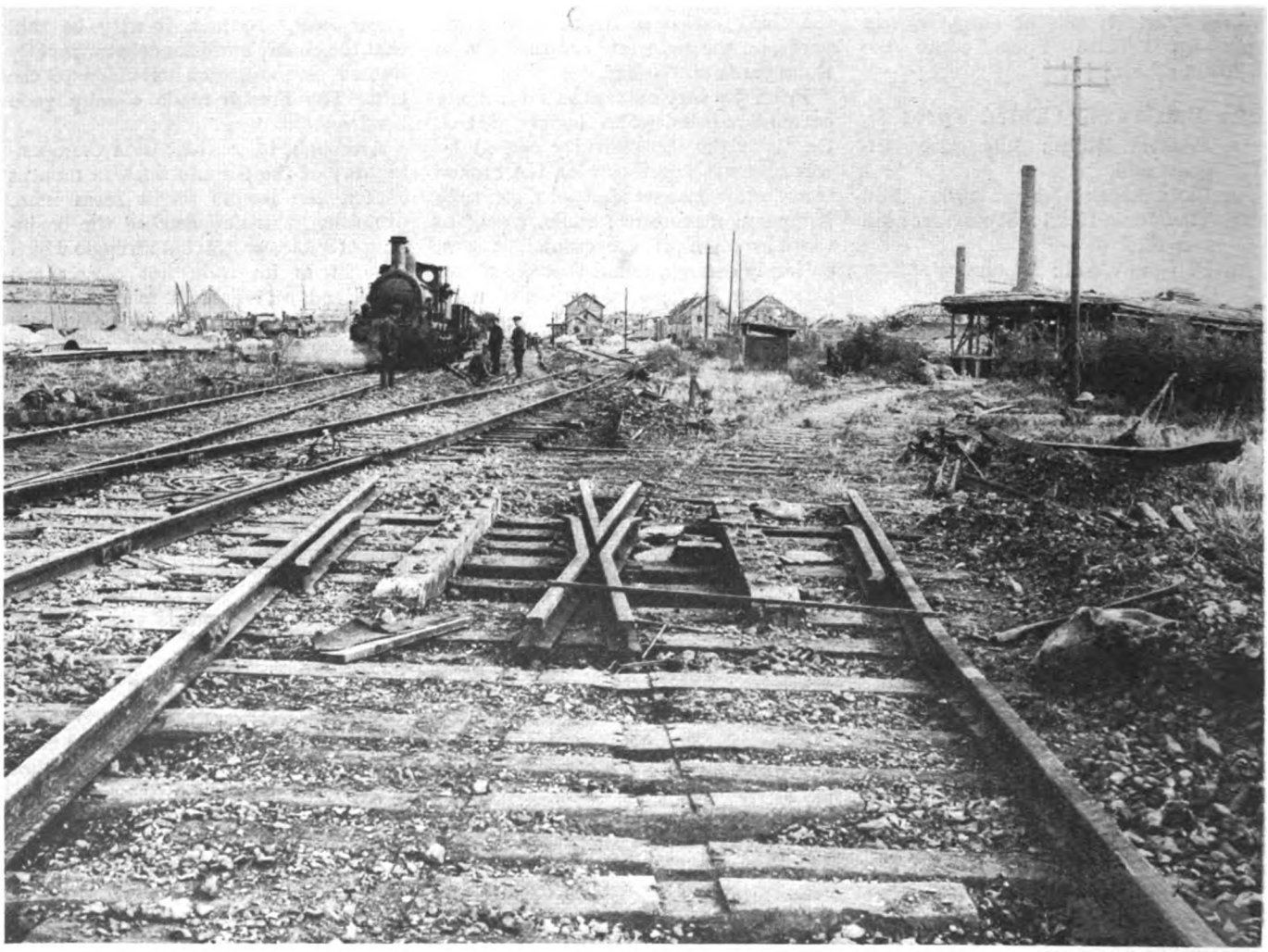

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON THE LINE FROM HAZEBROUCK

The railway station whose remains are here shown is that of Strazeele, on the Hazebrouck—Armentières line about 7 km. east of Hazebrouck itself. This photograph is dated September 25th, 1918; five months earlier, during the German Lys offensive, the thrust toward Hazebrouck had brought the enemy line to within a single mile of Strazeele. The front then ran from Meteren (held by the Germans) south-west past Strazeele toward the eastern edge of the Forêt de Nieppe.

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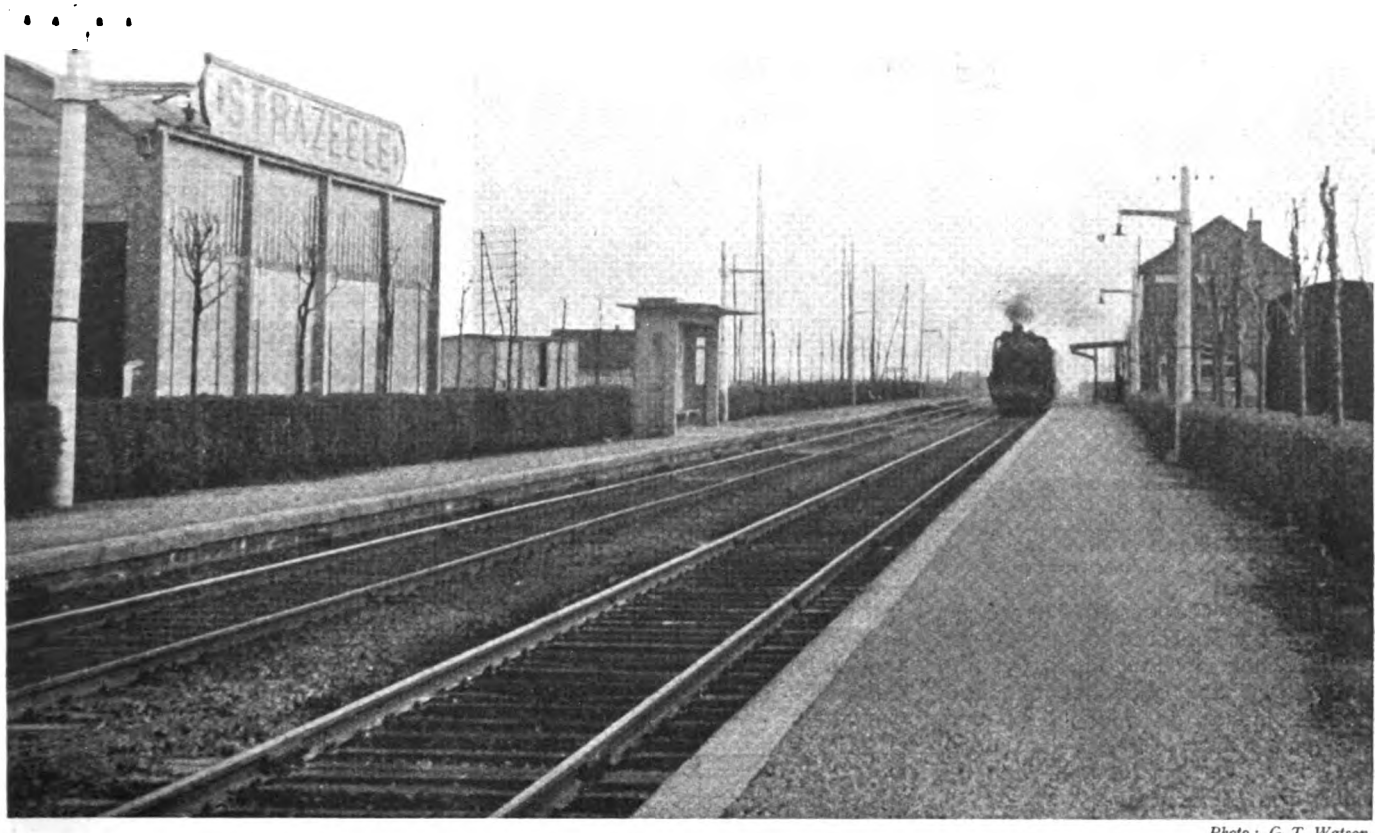

Photo: G. T. Watson.

STEAMING INTO STRAZEELE

Modern Strazeele station is a typical wayside stopping-place, with immensely long platforms and remarkably scant shelter for the hapless traveller doomed to await a train on a wet day. The whole village has been rebuilt out of all knowledge since the War, and the ex-soldier returning there would find it hard to connect the present garish place with the ugly industrial village, overlaid, as it were, by a fungoid growth of Army workshops, which witnessed such harrowing scenes in April, 1918.

"It is so easy to think what might have happened had we attacked on the 26th and 28th and got the high ground before this monsoon had burst on us. But that does no good. We cannot break off the battle now, even if we would. We have to fight forward here to keep the Germans from attacking the French. . . .

"The rain keeps on and with each day's rain our task gets more difficult . . . the front area now baffles description. . . . It is just a sea of mud churned up by shell-fire. There was very little firing, and, indeed, nothing of what we call in the *communiqués* 'activity,' only the endless toil of moving reliefs and rations and ammunition under incredibly difficult conditions."[1]

The troops were brought to the verge of despair. All the fruits of the opening day's fighting seemed to be snatched from them. But what could they do? This was their plight during the night of July 31st, after only twelve hours' rain:

"The ground was a mass of shell-holes with pill-boxes blown upside down and débris scattered everywhere, difficult enough for infantry to move over and almost impossible for guns. As the planked track could not be finished till nearly dark, only one battery could get forward, with eight horses per gun team and all ammunition by pack. . . . The ground, however, was so swampy that the guns could not open fire until platforms had been made . . . one or two were completely bogged and could not be got out for some days."[1]

Enough to Damp Enthusiasm

"Even in the drained country far behind the battlefield the farmer's carts had to splash for half a mile through shallow lakes of water on their way to the market towns. The battlefield became a bog; in every depression the flooded craters lay brim to brim like the footprints of monstrous animals in the slimy margin of some primeval water-hole. Streams and drains, their courses dammed by the tearing up of the ground, were no more than a string of water-filled mud-holes, in many places impassable. Elsewhere men could walk but with effort."[1]

In Sir Douglas Haig's despatch for August 4th he wrote:—"As the rain still continues I cannot yet say when it will be possible to continue the offensive."

[1] Charteris, *At G.H.Q.*, pp. 241, 243.

[1] Inglefield, *20th Division*, p. 150.

[1] *Australian Official History*, iv, p. 721.

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Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

EXTREME LEFT

Not a reference to this soldier's politics, but to his situation, for, on the date of the photograph—September 2nd, 1917—he was the left-hand man of the British forces on the Western Front. Stationed at Nieuport-Bains, on the Belgian coast, he belonged to the 4th Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment. The 66th (East Lancs.) Division had been sent to Nieuport at the end of June, after this sector had been taken over by us from the French XXXVI Corps.

Further progress seemed to be growing remote. The bombardment had smashed the front-line trenches, but it was now found that the pill-boxes remained, almost hidden in mud; they were impossible to locate from a distance, as they had been cunningly sited in the wilderness of shell-holes and slime which lay ahead. Still the defenders of the high ground in front of the II Corps held out; and, until this ground was taken, no further advance on the left was advisable, since it would mean creating a salient into which the enemy could with ease pour convergent artillery fire. Such had been the fate of many an attack on the Somme.

The rain held on, and not until August 6th could the II Corps try again; and it was not until the 10th that the unfortunate troops at length "cleaned up" a tangle of strong-points known as Westhoek. Here the Germans had recourse to strong counter-attacks, in which the fighting was of the most bitter description: "The state of the ground was now becoming appalling, and, with two successive attacks rendered failures by the mud, a lull set in on this part of the front—a lull during which each of the batteries in turn managed to seize a few days rest at the waggon-lines. The news that these short rests were to be granted was received with mixed feelings; clearly, if it was thought necessary to send each battery in turn for a short spell at the waggon-lines, the brigades were not destined to move right out of the line yet awhile, but on the other hand this new plan did assure a short interruption of the nerve-racking conditions of the gun line, and for this reason at any rate it was welcome."[1]

The Battle of Langemarck

Not until August 15th was it possible to order a fresh advance for the next day. The weather had cleared, and a good drying breeze sprang up, rendering the outlook considerably more hopeful. But on the eve of the attack down came the rain once more, so that it was under the most depressing conditions that there began the Battle of Langemarck.

This was planned on a lesser scale than the attack of July 31st, and the objective was far more limited. The four corps of the Fifth Army again succeeded in advancing along most of their front, although once more the II Corps had a very severe task to face, and made less progress than the rest of the line to the left of it.

"The story of the attack, alas! is not a long one. The German barrage came down swiftly, but, as it was for the most part on the assembly trenches and behind them, it had small effect on the leading waves. But the enemy machine guns all along the front opened fire almost simultaneously with our barrage. The concrete pill-boxes, containing in

1 Filgate, *33rd Div. Artillery*, p. 130.

Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

MEN OF THE WHITE ROSE

In fact, men of the West Yorkshire Regiment, seated in a captured German pill-box and waiting to go into action. The photograph was taken on September 27th, 1917, near the St. Julien—Gravenstafel road. At Gravenstafel a memorial to the New Zealanders now stands, but many of the war-time place-names along the aforesaid road were Canadian.

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some cases half a dozen separate compartments, seemed to be entirely unaffected by the pounding of many weeks. Moreover, strong wire entanglements running down obliquely [from the Front] were encountered.

"The lanes cut by artillery fire were covered by machine guns. The ground was a veritable quagmire. The 'mopping-up' system was found to be impossible. The concrete works had to be fought for; they could not be passed by and left to 'moppers-up' in rear. The inevitable result was that the men quickly lost the barrage. The strength of the attacking force had become inadequate to its frontage of one thousand five hundred yards.

"The foremost wave must have consisted of less than three hundred men, probably reduced to a third within half a minute. Not unfitting was the description of a sergeant who took part in the attack: 'it looked more like a big raiding party than anything else.'" [1]

"The cause of the infantry's undoing was the machine guns which played upon them and swept them while they struggled helplessly in the mud—machine guns safely ensconced in concrete pill-boxes while our men were in the mud up to their waists." [2]

[1] Falls, *36th Division*, p. 116.
[2] Filgate, *33rd Div. Artillery*, p. 132.

Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

KAMERADSCHAFT

An intensely human incident caught by the camera during the first day of that otherwise far from human episode, the Battle of Pilckem Ridge: a British soldier gives a light to a badly-wounded German. The Battle of Pilckem Ridge was fought between July 31st and August 2nd, 1917, and was the first act in the great drama collectively known as the Third Battle of Ypres. The Pilckem Ridge struggle, like many another to follow on its heels, ended in a deluge of rain and a bath of mud.

An Officer's Epigram

"The 'pill-boxes,' which were mainly responsible for the losses of troops in the attack of July 31st, were standing intact and garrisoned on the 16th of August. The claims of counter-battery sometimes prevented demands for re-bombardment being fully met. 'We felt,' said a distinguished officer after the action, 'that the Battle of Messines was won at Zero, and that the Battle of Ypres was lost long before it.'" [1]

This need for overcoming the resistance of the pill-boxes was productive of some desperate fighting.

For instance, the 11th Rifle Brigade, "after crossing with some difficulty the Steenbeek, and the swampy ground on each side of it, had a hand-to-hand fight with the enemy on the east bank, and then carried straight on under heavy machine-gun fire to [some ruins known as] Au Bon Gîte. The mill at this place and several smaller dug-outs were taken, but the main work, a solid structure scarcely damaged by the bombardment of our heavy guns, held out. Men were all round it and even on top of it, but the Germans inside had closed a strong steel door and could not be captured." [2]

In these fights there were not a few heroic incidents such as the following: one Sergeant Cooper, of the 12th King's Royal Rifles, gained the Victoria Cross when, "with four men, he immediately rushed towards the blockhouse, although heavily fired on. About

[1] Falls, *36th Division*, p. 122.
[2] Inglefield, *20th Division*, p. 154.

Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

CAMARADERIE

International comradeship of another sort—this time between allies. A French *poilu*, wearing a Red Cross brassard, carrying to safety a slightly wounded British Tommy. The scene—and note, by the way, the pill-box in the background—was photographed on August 17th, 1917, near Zuydschoote. At this time the Battle of Langemarck was in full swing.

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a hundred yards distant he ordered his men to lie down and fire at the blockhouse. Finding this did not silence the machine guns, he immediately rushed forward straight at them and fired his revolver into an opening in the blockhouse. The machine guns ceased firing and the garrison surrendered. Seven machine guns and forty-six prisoners were captured in the blockhouse."[1]

Fierce Enemy Opposition

The outcome of the fighting reflected great credit on the troops, in respect both of their endurance and of their courage; for the conditions in which they fought were indescribable. The II Corps, it is true, did not gain even the more limited objectives which it had been set; but the fury of the artillery concentration which met its advance exceeded all previous estimates. The XIX Corps fared a little better, yet did not make all the headway expected. Further to the left the XVIII Corps had an easier task, but even there some heavy counter-attacks checked progress, and regained for the enemy a little lost ground.

Only the XIV Corps could be deemed in any way successful. Although without the help of tanks—for the state of the ground was such that they would have been useless—it had struggled on to beyond the wreckage of Langemarck village.

But success was not truly complete; and so the Fifth Army was urged by Sir Douglas Haig to maintain the pressure, and to secure the outstanding points which had not yet been taken. On August 19th the XVIII Corps enjoyed a minor success, which was followed by other attacks on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 27th. Glencorse Wood had by now changed hands no less than eighteen times.

This was no "step by step" battle, and doubts began to arise, even in Sir Douglas Haig's mind, as to whether this hammer-and-tongs sort of conflict could continue; for even the fiercest and bloodiest fighting on the Somme in October of the previous year had not imposed so severe a strain on the men. Still, so long as the Germans continued counter-attacking, Haig might claim that their casualties justified the terrible British losses.

But soon the enemy began to realise that there was a limit to his own supply of reinforcements; and it would now seem as though, except in the case of artillery and machine gunners, he had been sending to the Flanders front his physically weaker men, in order to save his highest-class troops. Moreover, he had the armies on the Eastern Front to draw upon, now that Russia had collapsed, though he prudently tried to spare this priceless reserve for future use on some critical occasion. The British, on the other hand, were rapidly using up their best material.

Rain to Aid the Foe

The condition of the battlefield grew still worse as the weeks passed and saw it "churned into a sea of mud by the terrific bombardments. The Flanders

[1] *London Gazette.*

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SCENE OF A GREAT DISASTER

This is a war-time photograph of Laventie, and it was on the Laventie front that the Germans first managed to break through the Allied lines on April 9th, 1918. The 2nd Portuguese Division, under General Gomes da Costa, was holding this sector, and its raw young troops found themselves assailed at 7 a.m., in the midst of a thick fog, by a very strong German force. The Portuguese line gave almost at once, and the enemy swept forward to the Lys and Lawe rivers.

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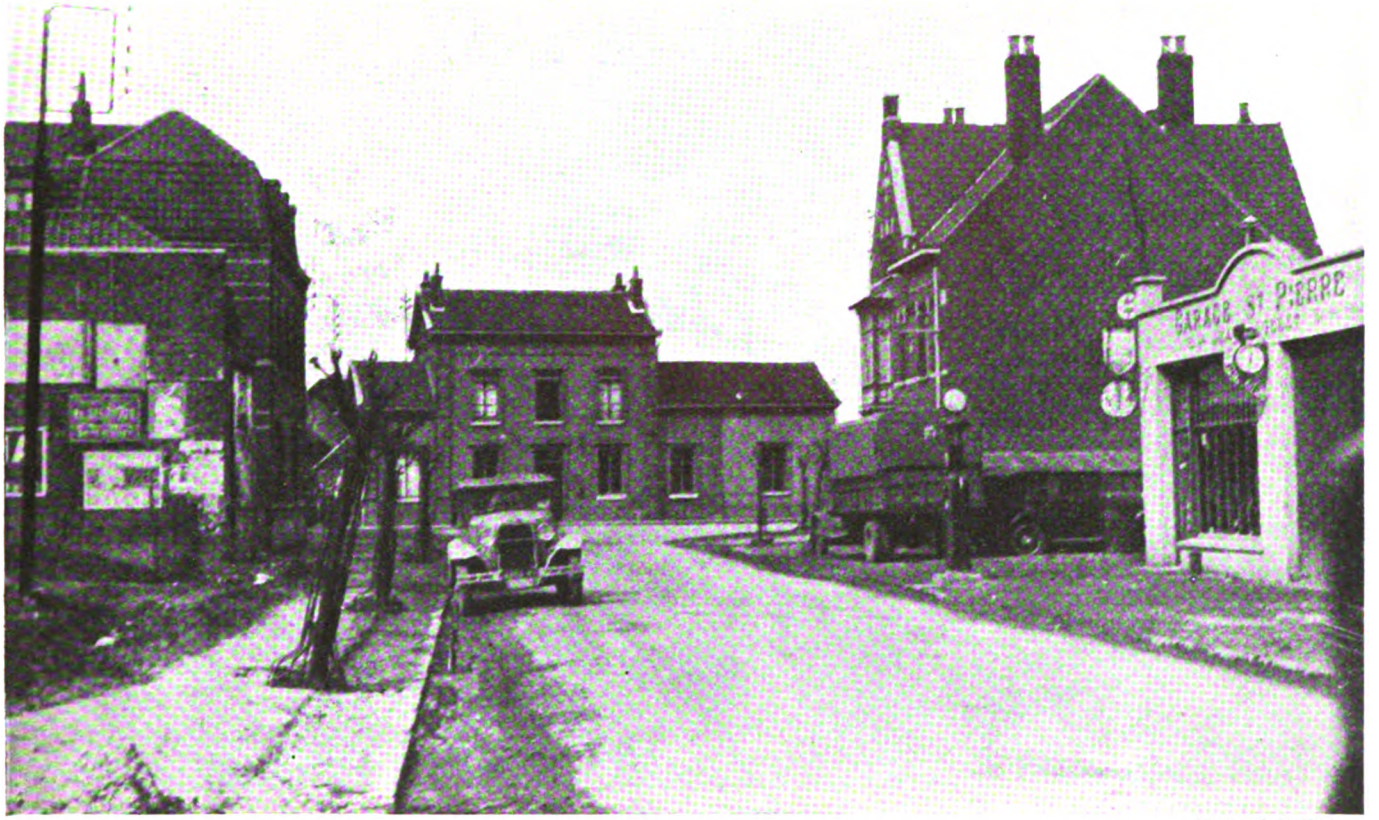

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ALL DISASTERS FORGOTTEN

The German attack on April 9th speedily involved other troops besides the Portuguese, and the British 165th Brigade in front of Festubert, and 119th and 121st Brigades in the Fleurbaix—Bois Grenier sector, respectively to right and left of the Portuguese, were early involved. The consequences of the Laventie break-through upon the reputation of our luckless allies are to some extent comparable with those attending the débâcle of our own Fifth Army. Heavy recrimination, and a complete cessation of confidence in the delinquents on the part both of G.H.Q. and of the public, were the immediate result; but time has brought to light many circumstances in favour of the Portuguese, and their military honour has been largely rehabilitated.

terrain, its natural drainage destroyed by tremendous shell fire, is become a huge swamp, vastly more effective in staying the British advance than any efforts of the enemy. Under these conditions, the German command is enabled to hold its trench positions with a comparatively light garrison—supported by massed machine-gun batteries and heavily reinforced artillery which, backed up over fairly solid ground, is able to provide a continuous belt of fire greater in depth and intensity than anything known to date."[1]

The Germans had been quick to take advantage of the difficulties of attack, and of the awful handicap which the ground imposed on those wishing to advance.

"At this time the enemy, finding that his strongest defences were unable to hold out against our attacks, adopted a new system of defence by which he held his front line only lightly, relying on large reserves kept close at hand to regain any ground that might be lost."[1] "He devoted his time in this part of the battlefield principally to organising shell-holes as posts and strong-points."[2]

The gunners suffered in as great a measure as the infantry: "The ground was very bad; it was estimated that the infantry advancing across No Man's Land could not cover one hundred yards in less than six minutes, and accordingly the barrage was so timed as to move forward twenty-five yards every minute and a half. Even at this slow pace the infantry were hard put to keep up with it, while the work of the gunners was rendered exceedingly heavy."[1]

Guns Buried in the Mire

Indeed, the artillery could scarcely move. The guns sank deeper into the mud at every shot. Accurate fire became difficult, while ranging was often misleading. Some shells, falling into soft mud, did not even explode. Most of them did so very late, throwing a column of mud and water into the air. At times the spectacle of the falling shells almost resembled that of a naval engagement.

Soon all progress became impossible except on the made roads—mostly

[1] Russenholt, *44th Batt. Canadian Light Infantry*, p. 120.

[1] *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches*, p. 120.
[2] Inglefield, *20th Division*, pp. 166–7.

[1] Filgate, *33rd Div. Artillery*, p. 117.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

STRETCHER-BEARERS BOGGED

A viscous scene photographed near Boesinghe on August 1st, 1917—the second day of the three-day Battle of Pilckem Ridge. Stretcher-bearers are seen carrying a wounded man through the mire, which reaches to their knees. If the First Battle of the Somme, 1916, had been a "blood-bath," "Third Ypres," 1917, was most decidedly a mud-bath. The terrible weather conditions are generally associated with the later Ypres battles, but Pilckem Ridge, the opening phase of the gruelling campaign, came to an unhappy standstill beneath a deluge of rain as overwhelming as any which fell in October and November.

plank tracks. "Yawning holes gaped everywhere; guns had been knocked out and had to be dragged from the pits on to the road; ammunition, buried or scattered by hostile fire, was dug up; the dead were removed and placed away near the road, whither presently a waggon would come for them, while the gun pits themselves required to be rebuilt so as to be fit for the new guns which the waggon-lines had already been ordered to bring up. It was gloomy work, this, and was rendered all the more depressing by the certain knowledge that presently the enemy would open fire and would wreak the same havoc all over again, but the outstanding necessity presented itself of keeping every gun and every battery fully ready at a moment's notice to support the infantry and prepared to open fire on any target within range."[1]

The plight of the men when resting was little better. Mud, liquid mud, was everywhere. Even the best of dug-outs, where rising ground permitted any to be built, were but miserable, dank holes. Here is a picture of the well-known dug-outs at Wieltje:

"Wieltje dug-outs! Who that saw it will ever forget that abominable mine, with its 'town major,' its thirteen entrances, the water that flowed down its main passages and poured down its walls, its electric light gleaming dully through steam-coated lamps, its sickly atmosphere, its smells, its huge population of men—and of rats?

"From behind sack-curtained doorways the coughing and groaning of men in uneasy slumber mingled with the click of typewriters. In the corridor one would fall over a runner slimy from head to foot with mud, resting while he waited for a return message to the front line. One advantage only it had: it was safe within. And that was in part counter-balanced by the danger of exit and entrance, constantly menaced by storms of fire. The cross-country tracks, simply paths from which wire had been cleared, behind it, were more horrible still."[1]

"The Worst Stage of the War"

Even the back-areas were no place for rest, and still less for recreation.

"The war had in those days reached its worst stage. Gas shelling and aeroplane bombing were at their height. The infantry resting in the camps

[1] Filgate, *33rd Div. Artillery*, p. 118.

[1] Falls, *36th Division*, pp. 112–13.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NEAR POLYGON WOOD

Firing a 15-inch Mark II howitzer—"Grannie" by name—during the Battle of Polygon Wood, September, 1917. This battle lasted from September 26th until October 3rd. Some of the severest fighting of the campaign took place in this vicinity, the wood being of considerable importance to the enemy, in that its capture, with that of the Nonne Boschen, would expose both Passchendaele Ridge and Zonnebeke. Similarly, the loss of Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse would imperil the German hold on Dumbarton Lakes, Shrewsbury Forest, and even Gheluvelt.

between Vlamertinghe and Elverdinghe had to endure, night after night, the crashing of great bombs among the huts and tents. The casualties to horses were very high, a horse being ten times as vulnerable as a man to bombs. The Casualty Clearing Stations probably suffered higher losses than in any other battle of the war. The counter-battery work was ferocious on both sides. For our batteries there was little concealment, and for their guns and teams little shelter. And, day after day, fell the rain." [1]

Most of the movement of troops and supplies at the front could be carried out only at night; and, owing to the precarious state of the roads, this was no easy task. Roads built of heavy timbers and railway sleepers alone could bear the traffic which was placed on them, and that with difficulty. Progress on them was at times hazardous indeed.

"The great baulks of timber squelched and heaved upon the morass underneath. Some, like the headstones in a graveyard, stood on end mocking and marking the deathbed of a mule and his hapless driver. The night would yet be dark. Then feet, long accustomed to stealthy movement after dusk, instinctively groped, finding each firm step, discarding the place of treachery." [1]

At night, in truth, the horrors of the battlefield were but intensified. Here is one witness's impression:—"During the hours of darkness the scene on the battlefield up in front is awful beyond description. Stretcher parties work doggedly in the almost hopeless task of caring for the countless wounded who mingle with the dead in the advanced positions. Parties of men lose direction in the darkness and wander to and fro in the mud, trying to find their units. The toll of killed and wounded mounts steadily under the everlasting pounding of enemy guns.

A Grim and Terrible Scene

"Overhead, great enemy bombing planes roar back and forth. The glare of burning ammunition dumps adds to the grim terror of the scene. All night long, section by section, step by step, the men fight their way forward. Companies strive to keep intact—scarce knowing what is ahead, behind, or on either flank." [1]

The real tragedy of Passchendaele lay in the insistence with which the British divisions were made to attack the Germans over ground the state of which alone—without enemy intervention—scarcely justified such tactics

[1] Falls, *36th Division*, p. 113.

[1] Hutchison, *Warrior*, p. 225.

[1] Russenholt, *44th Batt. Canadian Light Infantry*, p. 123.

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during this whole month of August. But the stubborn will of the commander-in-chief prevailed. He could see the Allied Cause only as a whole. The mirage of the break-through drove him on.

Perhaps he was right. But how great was the cost! In the first place, the growing casualty lists, with so little result to show for them, were estranging the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, from the High Command of the Army. The statesman could point to the losses during August alone—110,000, of which the II Corps had suffered exactly one quarter—and to the dwindling prospects of success. He now began to urge the diversion of the Allied effort to the Allied front.

Far worse was the fact that this terrific struggle in the mud was undermining the confidence of the Army in its leaders. Even Haig was no longer immune to criticism, though perhaps still immune to attack. The evil name of Passchendaele was gained during those ghastly weeks in August; later events merely confirmed the harm which had been done.

General Headquarters, indeed, could claim that the morale of the German Army was being hard hit by the determination of the attack. Prisoners were said to be degenerating in quality. German surrenders were growing more frequent. That was all true: but the fact remained that the efficacy of the enemy's machine guns and of his artillery remained high. And then, too, he was husbanding that reservoir of fine troops, his Eastern Front Army.

A Question of Morale

Judging by appearances, Sir Douglas Haig assumed that the German reserves were approaching exhaustion. The real question at issue was whether the morale of the British would not give out first.

Thousands of wounded were returning to England, there to spread tales of the indescribable conditions prevalent on the battlefield; and this served to fan the flame of discontent and of criticism of the leaders of the Army.

General Gough was by now convinced that the high ground in front of his right and right centre would never be taken unless the Second Army joined in the attack, in prolongation of the right wing of the Fifth Army. Only by such means would it be possible to overcome the German defence. This was agreed to by Sir Douglas Haig; but General Plumer would agree only on condition that the Second Army be given time to prepare for so heavy a task. Consequently the date for the opening of the new battle could not be fixed earlier than September 20th.

At the same time General Gough had also ventured to express the opinion that the entire operation might be abandoned. But Sir Douglas Haig remained adamant. Viewing the position purely from his standpoint, he was possibly justified in his decision. The situation in France, in Italy, and in Russia appeared gloomy; and it was more than ever clear to him that the British Army must continue to bear the burden. The price was heavy; but to Sir Douglas it seemed inevitable that it must be paid.

Photo: Central Press.

TYNE COT, CITY OF THE DEAD

The Tyne Cot Memorial, and the stupendous Tyne Cot Cemetery—no milder adjective suffices to describe this host upon host of silent graves—form one of the greatest British monuments on the Western Front. The Memorial commemorates 34,888 missing of the British Empire who fell, in the Ypres Salient alone, between August 16th, 1917, and the Armistice. The graves total no less than 11,856, comprising 8,901 United Kingdom, 1,353 Australian, 966 Canadian, 519 New Zealand, 90 South African, 14 Newfoundland, 6 Guernsey, 2 British West Indies, 1 French, and 4 German.

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CHAPTER LXVII

"THIRD YPRES": THE FORTNIGHT OF SUCCESS

In spite of the heavy casualties sustained by our troops, the battle continued with unabated drive. The enemy was subjected to a period of strain which undoubtedly was to have its effect upon his morale, and to pave the way for the final struggle in the following year. Ludendorff, in his Memoirs, *makes frequent reference to the severity of the ordeal through which the defending Germans passed, and in a reference to the fighting on October 4th, 1917, states that "again we came through it only with enormous losses."*

AUGUST at length dragged to a weary and blood-stained close. The Allied situation, regarded as a whole, was far from being one that could be considered satisfactory. Yet in spite of Mr. Lloyd George's misgivings, there seemed to Sir Douglas Haig no alternative but to try to force a success on the Western Front before the winter. Consequently he ordered the Second and Fifth Armies to make ready to renew the offensive in Flanders.

Haig's Plans

Even though he might not be able to clear the Germans from the Belgian coast, he hoped at least to gain the much-to-be-desired Passchendaele-Staaden ridge, and this for two reasons. Firstly, it would enable the British troops to occupy the higher ground standing above the wet levels of the Ypres flats. This would permit of their spending the winter in better conditions, whilst avoiding the constant losses resulting from their present situation at the mercy of the German artillery surrounding the Salient.

Secondly, he hoped that the possession of that ground would afford him the desired jumping-off line whence to launch in the early spring a new drive for the possession of the German submarine bases in Belgium. The situation regarding the Belgian coast was now verging on the fantastic, since it seemed as though the greatest naval Power in the world was being compelled to resort to her improvised military might in order to maintain her domination of the seas!

There was, however, to be a complete change in the conduct of this coming offensive. General Rawlinson, among others, had addressed a memorandum to the commander-in-chief in which he reviewed the past fighting, pointing out that the true "step-by-step" procedure had never been properly applied in Flanders. It was, therefore, agreed that the coming battle should be fought on a totally different plan. The advances were to be more deliberate, less ambitious, and slowed down to compensate for the terrible conditions under which the infantry would have to fight their way forward.

Above all, they were to be carried out on a wider front: this latter condition being essential for the prevention of heavy casualties such as had been experienced on the Somme and at Ypres, owing to the concentration of enemy fire which could be brought to bear against a narrow-fronted attack. Trench warfare, in short, was a form of siege operation—a fact which, except at Messines, had never been taken into sufficient account.

Attack by Artillery

The artillery barrage was to become virtually the prime factor in the attack, whilst the infantry would follow the barrage more as a "mopping-up" line than as bearers of the main burden of the combat. Since the attacking of pill-boxes seemed now to be the chief feature of fighting in Flanders, the infantry tactics must be modified:

"As the series of waves, so successful in the Arras battles, had not proved suitable to meet the new conditions, it was planned that the infantry attack should be carried out by lines of sections, each section being in file and separated from its neighbours by about twenty yards. Provided the leadership was good this procedure held out reasonable chances of success."[1]

For attacking the pill-boxes, a new type of phosphorus bomb was supplied to the troops. Once ignited and thrown into a closed building, it would, both by its fumes and its incendiary action, force the garrison to abandon cover.

After the close of the August fighting, the weather, in its perverse fashion, gradually improved. A great part of the battlefield assumed the appearance of a dusty desert, and only the depressions remained boggy. But General Plumer refused to move until all his preparations should be complete, or until his infantry should be rested, as far as that might be possible, and properly drilled in the new tactical formations. After a fortnight's work it was possible to forecast an early resumption of the offensive. But, if this were to be undertaken, there was no time to lose, since the finer weather might not last into October, in which case the advantage of the drying ground would be lost.

Even now the valley bottoms were far from being passable, whilst the surface of the higher ground, though relatively dry, was so badly ploughed up by shell fire that progress remained difficult and at times perilous. Meanwhile, in order to facilitate control of the attack, on September 3rd, the II Corps area was transferred to the Second Army. Simultaneously the I Anzac Corps replaced that sorely tried formation, whilst the V Corps relieved the XIX Corps.

The Anzacs arrived fresh from a long rest, and presented a fine appearance. It was at this time that their well-known nickname of "diggers" came into universal use. Hitherto that epithet had not so often been heard, and seems to have been usually restricted to the New Zealanders, to whom it was attributed with reference to the gum-diggers of their country.

The New Offensive Begins

At length the preparations were complete, and, in Ludendorff's own words—"after a period of profound quiet in the West which led some to hope that the Battle of Flanders was over, another terrific assault was made on our lines on September 20th." But

[1] Ewing, *9th Division*, p. 226.

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PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE: A STUDY WHICH TYPIFIES—
A view of the famous ridge taken on November 14th, 1917, and giving an excellent idea of the country over which the troops had to advance. November was the last month of the long-drawn-out and, as many thought, futile struggle; and in actual fact this photograph dates from four days after the Second Battle of Passchendaele, which was the eighth and last operation of the series, had come to its miserable end. The picture is a prolongation of the one opposite.

although the German High Command had been hoping for a cessation of the fighting, and had actually relieved some of the troops, the regiments in the front line were not so optimistic. They were not altogether unprepared for the British attack, which, from the direction of the main efforts, was to become known as the Battle of the Menin Road.

This battle, the first act in the new offensive, was planned on a less ambitious scale, while it was designed to be fought strictly on the "step-by-step" plan, and was to be in the nature of a prelude to the succeeding actions, which would likewise be strictly limited in scope. More important still, there was to be a complete cessation of prolonged attacks by smaller bodies such as divisions, or even corps.

These protracted efforts, indeed, had been the real reason why the First Battle of the Somme in 1916, and "Third Ypres" in August, 1917, had degenerated into a sequence of costly attacks on narrow fronts. The Battle of the Menin Road, as well as its two successors, was to be fought on the widest possible front, and there was to be no subsequent "hammering away" at those points in the enemy's front which might defy capture in the initial attack.

The incredibly evil fortune that seemed to dog Sir Douglas Haig's plans once more nearly ruined them. September 19th, 1917, was a beautiful day, bright, with a good breeze; but, as night fell, so the weather once more changed. It began to drizzle; and then, before 11 p.m., the accursed rain began, and the dusty desert again assumed a slimy, slippery surface. The telephones were soon busy with inquiries addressed to high places as to whether the attack should be carried out at all. Then suddenly the rain ceased. There was no longer any question: the attack must be pushed home.

"Practice Barrages"

The bombardment which preceded the assault had not been continuous, but had consisted mainly of "practice barrages" and "Chinese attacks," so arranged and timed as to mislead the Germans into imagining that a real attack might be coming. Each time that it was calculated that the enemy had sent a warning to his men in the front-line trenches to expect an attack, the barrage would be brought back over them and no attack carried out.

Everything was done to mystify the enemy as to the exact hour of the assault. "Practice barrages began to be fired on September 15th, and zero hour was finally timed for 5.40 a.m. on September 20th. The enemy fire was causing the British batteries cruel losses, whilst they remained silent waiting for the hour to come.

"With terrible slowness the minutes passed: 5·9 and 4·2 shells were crashing every minute into the battery positions, ammunition was exploding, men were being knocked out and a number of direct hits were destroying the guns, killing and wounding every single man of the detachments. In some batteries a few more minutes would have put every gun out of action, but mercifully zero hour was at last reached; a sheet of flame lit up the entire countryside and with a great roar the barrage began."[1]

The barrage proved one of the most effective known in the War; so much so that time and again, after the infantry attack had developed, the German pill-boxes were taken out of hand; many

[1] Filgate, *33rd Divisional Artillery*, p. 117.

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Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

—THE CONDITIONS PREVAILING DURING MOST OF "THIRD YPRES"

The other half of the photograph, which was taken in the area of the 2nd Canadian Division. Passchendaele village is situated about 11 km. north-east of Ypres, on the road Ypres—Zonnebeke—Passchendaele—Westroosebeke; while another road leads from Passchendaele south-east to Moorslede. The ridge was not a clear-cut feature, but rather a series of low hills divided by shallow valleys. In direction it ran from Passchendaele to Inverness Copse, *via* Broodseinde, Polygon Wood, and Gheluvelt.

of their garrisons even surrendered without resistance. Glencorse Wood, of evil memory, was easily taken. By about 11 a.m. nearly all objectives were in British hands. It would be difficult to describe the sense of relief that spread throughout the Army as this success began to be realised.

It had not been gained without losses; but what were these, when compared with the sufferings of the troops throughout August? Even the German counter-attacks effected nothing, and were shattered by the intensity of the barrage. "Excellent"—"the best ever put up"—"magnificent in accuracy and volume"—such were the praises bestowed on this hurricane of shells by the Australians.

The Formations Concerned

The Second Army had sent forward two Corps, the X and I Anzac; the Fifth Army continued the assault with the V and XVIII Corps, together with one division of the XIV Corps. The centre of the attack was carried out by 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions of the Anzacs, supported on the left by the V Corps. The V and XVIII Corps sent forward the 9th, 55th, and 58th Divisions. The X Corps, placing the 39th, 41st, and 23rd Divisions in line, covered the right flank of the Anzacs.

The advance was timed for 5.40 a.m. The Australians had wished it to be 5.10 a.m., but, as tanks were to be employed—though not with the Australians—the later hour was preferred.

The main attack had been carried out by five divisions on a front 1,000 yards less in extent than that which the II Corps had previously attacked with only three divisions. The heaviest losses suffered by the troops were actually incurred by the Anzacs in rear of the attacking line, as the latter was moving into the jumping-off line. This was due to the fact that the German artillery was too late to catch the advance, so that the barrage fell behind it.

The previous night's rain had luckily caused a mist to rise, and the enemy could see but indifferently. Their pill-boxes, thickly placed on the front of the Australians, resisted but weakly. Only the machine-gunners in the fortified shell-holes seemed anxious to fight. Germans surrendered freely, some even coming out of their pill-boxes waving white rags. A few desperate little skirmishes here and there were all that delayed the advance.

Along the whole line progress was much the same. By 6.15 the first stage of the battle was over. Soon after 7 a.m., the barrage returned to the front of the infantry. In the centre progress became even easier, and by 7.40 a.m. the second objective, the Blue Line, had been reached. Now came a two-hour pause whilst entrenching and securing the line thus gained was in progress. At 9.50, the barrage once more returned to the Blue Line, and the advance began again. The last stage was short, although some difficulty arose, as several pill-boxes had been necessarily captured in front of the Blue Line.

It had been arranged that the Anzacs should not progress beyond the near edge of Polygon Wood, whilst the 23rd Division were engaged in clearing the ruins of Velhoek village and the redoubtable group of pill-boxes and concrete works, known as the Tower Hamlets, situated nearly on the Menin Road.

An Individual Exploit

Among the many brave deeds performed in these battles for the pill-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NOT PONDS, BUT SHELL-HOLES

Another view of the shelled and waterlogged ground on Passchendaele Ridge, photographed as long after the event as February, 1918. The ridge is nowhere more than 40 or 50 feet higher than the ground to the west of it, from which it slopes up fairly gradually. On the eastern side, however, the declivity is not nearly so gentle.

boxes, there is one which will stand out for all time as among the most cold-blooded acts of daring of the whole War. Captain H. Reynolds, of the 12th Royal Scots, led his men against one such work. After severe losses, he and some others surrounded it; yet still the machine gun kept firing through the slit. Reynolds crept right up to the opening and produced a phosphorous bomb to hurl through it.

The Germans, seeing the danger, pushed a pack into the embrasure and fired their gun through it. With incredible coolness Reynolds raised himself into the embrasure and *pushed* his bomb between the pack and the concrete. His tunic was cut to shreds by the German bullets, yet he remained unscratched. Then the bomb exploded, and the garrison rushed out of the pill-box into the arms of the expectant Scots. A V.C. rewarded this exhibition of superb courage.

By 11.30 a.m. the third stage was complete. The advance, on the whole, had been a brilliant success. As a German historian puts it: "The new English method of attack has proved its effectiveness. . . . The loss of a sector so terribly fought over . . . was necessarily also of great moral effect."[1]

The German counter-attacks came to nothing, being crushed by the barrage. In fact, the massing of troops for this purpose only led to heavier losses.

But if the centre, consisting mainly of the 1st and 2nd Australian and 9th British Divisions, advanced so easily and surely, the same did not hold good of the entire front.

The Tower Hamlets offered a fierce resistance, for the enemy seemed determined to cling to this high ground, which—to use a discredited expression—could be regarded as the key to the situation. Here the X Corps had engaged the 41st Division, which had had to fight desperately hard to win the second objective. It failed to carry the third objective, the Tower Hamlets Spur, and a local attack attempted in the last resort during the afternoon also came to nothing.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT CLAPHAM JUNCTION

Clapham Junction was a point on the Menin Road some 5 km. east of Ypres, where the otherwise straight route turns from approximately east to nearly south-east, with Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse to the north, and Sanctuary Wood and Stirling Castle to the south. Our photograph shows infantry and camouflaged tanks moving up to the attack on September 26th, 1917, at the outset of the Battle of Polygon Wood.

Sudden Bond of Brotherly Love

Nevertheless, in spite of a local set-back or two, the relief occasioned throughout the Army by this progress was intense. A cloud seemed to lift. Australian and British suddenly found a bond of union between themselves, and admired one another's work. Thus speaks a gunner of the 23rd Division: "We were next the Anzacs, splendid fellows. I remember looking back and seeing the Boche fairly pounding it in there: and all the time the Anzac guns kept on firing away, and we wondered how they could do it—how on earth they weren't blown to blazes. Right in the thick of it you would see them firing every time. Then we moved up and came alongside some of

[1] *Schlachten des Welt Krieges*, xxvii, p. 117.

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them, and I was telling one of them what we saw and how splendid we thought it was; he said, 'Do you know, we were looking across at you chaps and thinking just the same thing about you.'"[1]

There now came a lull in the fighting. The second step of the advance was timed to begin on September 26th, when the brunt of the attack was to fall upon the X, I Anzac, and V Corps. The main difficulty in the way of the advance was that of bringing up the artillery to new positions. The ground being as bad as it was, this process could be carried out only after hard tracks, or even railways, had been constructed.

Across cratered ground plank roads were generally the easiest form of improvised thoroughfare; but then there arose the problem of conveying the planks. Every day a special train carrying 240 tons of timber arrived at Ouderdom siding, whence a system of motor-lorries and waggons conveyed them up to the required point.

The engineers, the gunners, and the pioneers had a busy time indeed. "So clayey and soft was the soil here that we had to lay down gun platforms of a special kind. It would not have been sufficient to place, as usual, strong planks on the ground; we had first to sink fascines in it, throw road-metal on the intervening spaces, and on this surface rest a double-deck platform, well nailed together, of beach slabs. Similarly for trail supports, we had to drive in a quarter-circle of seven foot stakes, in which we interwove some more fascines."[2]

Ludendorff's Description

At last the programme of preliminaries had been completed. The attack was to take place on September 26th; and it was to be—in Ludendorff's own words—"a day of heavy fighting, accompanied by every circumstance that could cause us Germans loss. We might be able to stand the loss of ground, but the reduction of our fighting strength was again all the heavier. . . . The actions of the Third Battle of Flanders had presented the same set-piece characteristics. . . . The depth of penetration was limited so as to secure immunity from our counter-attacks, and the latter were then broken up by the massed fire of the artillery."[3]

The artillery preparation for the action of September 26th, known as the Battle of Polygon Wood, closely resembled that which had been arranged and carried out between the 15th and 20th. But the objectives were more limited, and were in reality but a means of gaining the high ground which must be held in order to develop the next attack on the Broodseinde

From the painting in the Imperial War Museum.

"AFTER THE PUSH"

The mud of Passchendaele as envisaged by the famous artist, C. R. W. Nevinson, in a study which makes interesting comparison with the photograph immediately opposite. In pre-war days there were no large villages upon the ridge, but many substantial farmhouses, presiding over well-cultivated farms interspersed with woodlands.

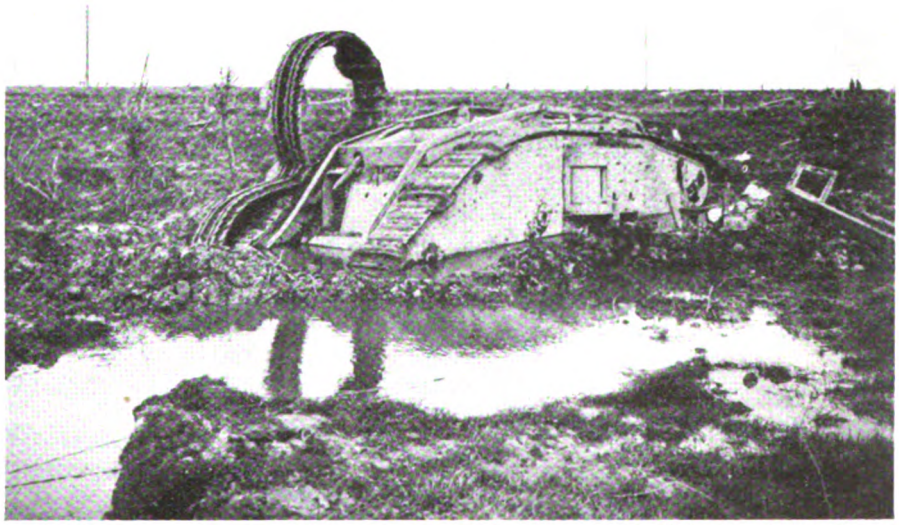

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HARD AND FAST

A British tank, with one of its caterpillar-tracks looped fantastically in the air, lies immovable and half-submerged near St. Julien, October 12th, 1917. This village is situated some distance westward of Passchendaele and its ridge, but the date coincides with that of the first Passchendaele battle, which lasted only one day, and was the seventh of the eight battles comprised in "Third Ypres." The above scene is highly typical.

[1] From a private diary.
[2] Goold Walker, *The H.A.C. in the Great War.*
[3] Ludendorff: *Memoirs.*

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ridge. On the night of the 24th, the 33rd Division relieved the 23rd Division, on the right of the Anzacs. Among the latter, the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions were relieved by the 4th and 5th.

On the 25th the Germans, fearing an attack on the high ground along which ran their *Flandern I* position, launched a heavy attack against the extreme Australian right and the left of the 33rd Division. The fighting which resulted proved most confusing, and nearly resulted in disorganising the entire operation as planned for the next day.

The 98th Brigade was driven in, and only the staunchness of the 4th King's and the resourcefulness of the Australians obviated a disaster. Fortunately the Australian right was able to assist, and the situation was more or less restored, although clearly the 33rd Division would no longer be able to take so vigorous a part in the coming battle as the situation required.

Round Polygon Wood

The 26th was marked by another success. At 5.50 a.m. the British barrage commenced, and again it could be regarded as more than adequate, although the dust raised by the bursting shells was such that the advancing troops seemed to be running into a solid cloud. Seven divisions advanced. The fighting for Polygon Wood was severe, for the Germans seemed still intent on keeping a hold on this high ground. But the 33rd Division and the Australian 14th and 15th Brigades fought finely, and by nightfall had gained their objectives. In the afternoon the 2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers made an advance which the Australians —no mean connoisseurs—described as "superb."

The outcome of the day's fighting was that the British had been successful all along the line. Only at one point had they failed to reach their objectives or to hold them. This was on the front of the 3rd Division (which had relieved the 9th Division), where this unit was making a last effort to seize Windmill Cabaret Hill. It was counter-attacked no less than four times, and was forced down the hill.

Such a result could be regarded as entirely satisfactory, for the enemy had almost succeeded in disorganising the whole British plan by his fierce attack of the 25th, and also, from prisoners then taken, undoubtedly possessed full knowledge of the attack planned for the 26th. The successful outcome of

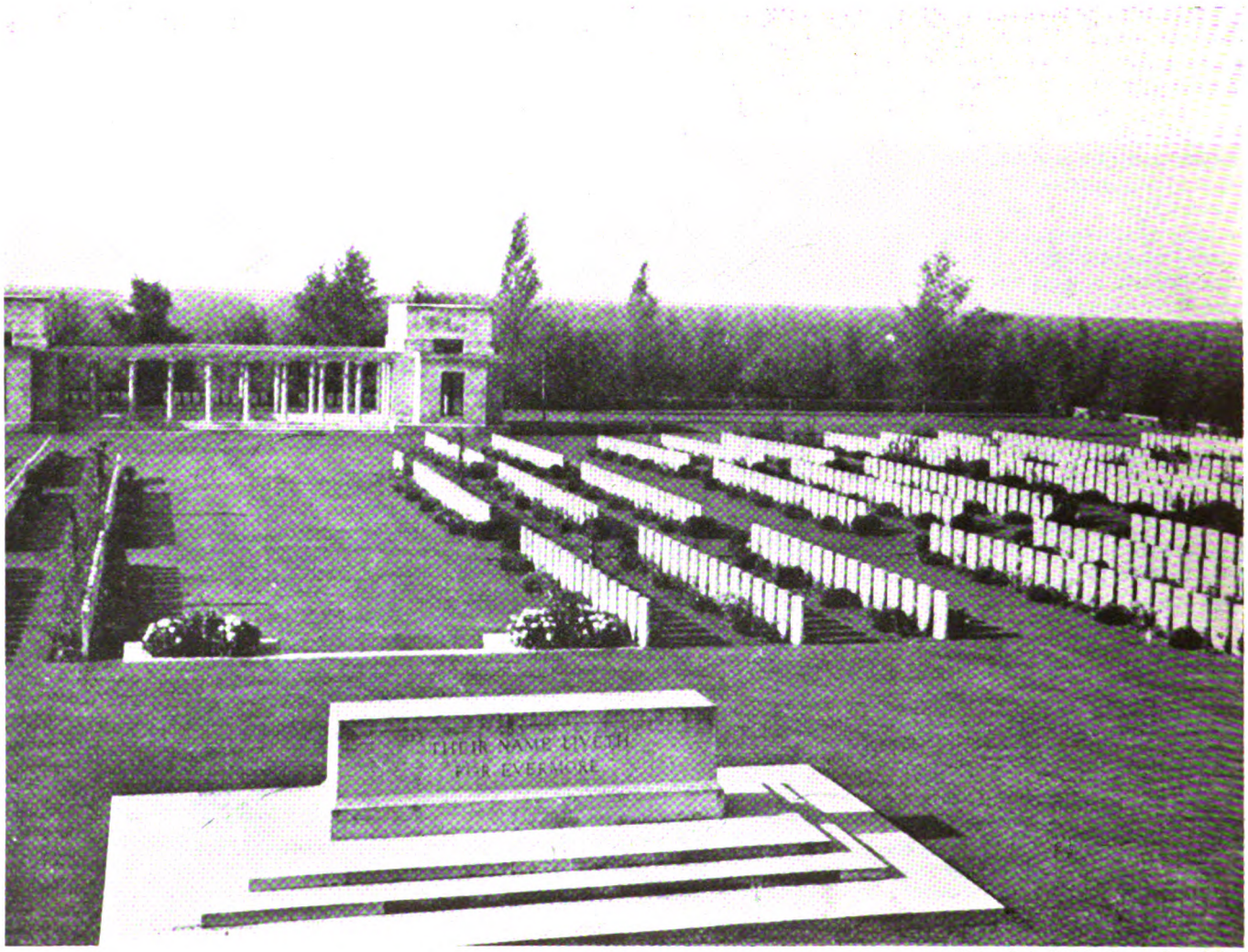

Photo: Imperial War Graves Commission.

WHERE PASSCHENDAELE WARRIORS LIE

Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood, the burial-ground here illustrated, has already been portrayed, from another angle, in the "Then and Now" pair of photographs appearing on pages 1010 and 1011. This view, however, shows the fine record building, which contains the memorial to New Zealand missing. It may be remarked that the young trees filling the whole of the background are thoroughly characteristic of the reafforestation on and near the once well-timbered Passchendaele Ridge. The trees here seen are, of course, those of Polygon Wood itself.

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AMIENS
Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

FIRE-FIGHTING IN AMIENS

A photograph of the Rue de Beauvais, Amiens, taken on April 27th, 1918, and showing French firemen coping with an incendiary outbreak consequent upon the bursting of a German shell. The bombardment of Amiens at this period—April to June, 1918—was mainly undertaken by the 280-mm. " Big Bertha " type gun situated near Chaulnes, this gun having a range of 30 miles. The enemy thrust toward the town, however, had been officially abandoned by German G.H.Q. as long ago as the 4th April. The fighting at Villers-Bretonneux on April 24th was considered merely a local operation.

Photo: Keystone

THE RUE DE BEAUVAIS ON A WET DAY

The Rue de Beauvais is one of several main streets in Amiens, and runs from the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville—the Town Hall Square—in the centre of the town, toward the point of junction of two large thoroughfares known as the Boulevard Carnot and the Boulevard St. Charles. In earlier War days than those alluded to above, this town had been a popular goal for men of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Armies who could snatch a few hours' leave in which to visit it.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A GLIMPSE OF AMIENS CATHEDRAL

This view shows the " back " of the famous edifice from the point where the small Rue Victor Hugo, in which the camera is standing, leaves the street picturesquely known as the Rue des Trois Cailloux, or Street of the Three Pebbles. The last-named being one of the principal thoroughfares running through the town, this particular glimpse of the cathedral is one familiar to all residents, and the majority of visitors, in Amiens. The date of the photograph is May 11th, 1918.

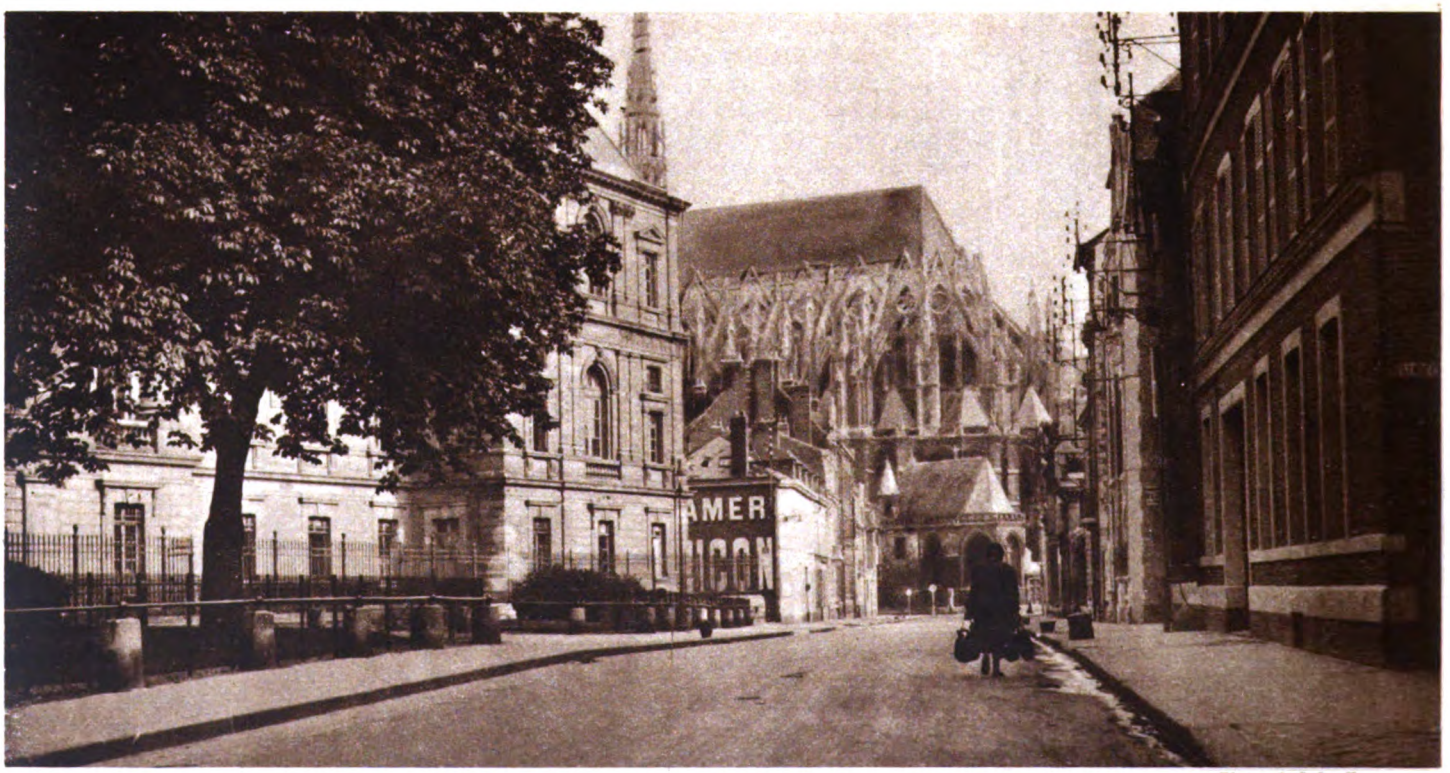

Photo: A. J. Insall

ALL TIDIED UP

Amiens Cathedral is generally regarded as one of the finest examples—some say *the* finest example—of Gothic architecture still extant ; and unwontedly elaborate measures were taken to preserve it from the ravages of war. An earlier illustration in TWENTY YEARS AFTER showed the sandbags which shielded the carving round one of the porches. In all, several thousand of these bags were massed round doorways and other important external points, while further thousands protected the choir-stalls, etc., inside. The building was begun in 1220 A.D., and virtually completed in 1269. The foundations of its grey limestone walls are 26 feet thick.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

WHEN DESTRUCTION WAS RIFE

A view of the Rue des Trois Cailloux previously mentioned. This street was one of the best known in the town in the days when British soldiers trod the sidewalks or the *pavé*, and is of interest to the pilgrim in that some, though not all, of the war-time establishments still remain. The chocolate-shop, for instance, once thronged with British officers at tea-time, is still there, although under fresh management. It used to be known far and wide for its drinking-chocolate and truffles.

Photo: A. J. Insall

FRESH AND ATTRACTIVE

Three Pebbles' Street has been slightly widened since the War, and is now an attractive and typically French urban thoroughfare. The famous chocolate-shop was—and is—situated between the Place René Goblet and a turning somewhat alarmingly named Rue du Corps Nu Sans Tête, or Naked-and-Headless-Body Street. A little beyond the stretch seen in this photograph, and just off the main street, one Madame Joséphine, perhaps the most famous Amienoise of the War period, still officiates in the restaurant called " Aux Huitres " (" At the Sign of the Oysters "), where many a square meal went down many a British throat in the old days.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A DISMAL SPECTACLE

A photograph which seems to symbolize in one vista all the tragedy and desolation wrought upon the face of the earth by war. The lonely and battered highway is a section of the notorious Amiens—St. Quentin road—that ill-starred route whose straight east-to-west span crosses the whole depth of the Somme battlefield. This particular photograph, which was taken at the time of the great German withdrawal in March, 1917, shows a portion of the road near Rainecourt, close to which village it is intersected by the Albert—Bray—Rosières—Montdidier route.

Photo: A. J. Insall

BATTLE-SCARRED NO LONGER

There is little of war in a modern photograph of the Amiens—St. Quentin highway. There are, of course, the trees to remind such travellers as can appreciate the significance of their youth; and the assiduous searcher among the wayside flowers might find, in time, some rusty relic of the bygone days of horror; but in the main those days are, mercifully, bygone indeed, and the flat, prairie-like country of the Somme basin presents to the average eye no more than a wide, rich plain bearing food for the body rather than the mind.

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Photo: Imperial War Graves Commission.

NEW IRISH FARM CEMETERY

This cemetery has been constructed 300 yards north of the point known during the War as Irish Farm, the exact site being Hammond's Corner, at the junction of two minor roads leading to Ypres from Langemarck and St. Julien respectively. The cemetery was begun in August, 1917, and is fairly large, containing 4,272 United Kingdom, 254 Canadian, 65 Australian, 23 New Zealand, 6 South African, 5 Indian, 3 Newfoundland, 1 West Indies, 6 Chinese, 1 German, and 12 unknown graves. The nearest hamlet is St. Jean-lès-Ypres, slightly to the south.

the fighting redounds greatly to the credit of the 15th Australian Brigade, which ably restored the situation where it had been heavily compromised by the events of the 25th. The effect of the success on the enemy was remarkable: they hardly seemed to realise what had happened, or where their new position now lay.

The third step in the British advance was now planned. This was the capture of Broodseinde Ridge, perhaps now the most important feature in the desolation round Ypres. For the new operation the II Anzac Corps was called upon to relieve the V Corps, while in the II Anzac Corps, composed of the 3rd Australian, New Zealand, 44th, and 66th Divisions, the two first-named were to attack. This enabled three Australian and one New Zealand divisions to be placed in line—a memorable event for the Anzacs.

To Attack Broodseinde Ridge

The whole operation would thus be carried out, from right to left, by the IX Corps, with the 37th Division; the X Corps, with the 5th, 21st, and 7th Divisions; the four Anzac Divisions, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and New Zealand; the XVIII Corps, with the 48th and 11th Divisions; and lastly, on the left, the XIV Corps, with the 4th and 29th Divisions. That is, twelve divisions were to move on a front of 14,000 yards; while the advance was to vary from 1,000 to 2,000 yards in depth.

Once more the Germans attempted to dislocate the plan of attack. At dawn on October 1st they launched an assault on the 21st and 7th Divisions, but only to the south-east of Polygon Wood did their attempts lead to any result. Feverish work was in hand all along the front to complete the construction of roads for the coming battle.

Then the weather began to give warnings of what was in store. On October 3rd some slight rain was felt, which was enough to make the going indifferent. Cold squalls began to blow from the south-west. At 12.30 a.m. on the 4th it was beginning to rain. "It was lowering and drizzling, and the German flares looked dull and glazed like fishes' eyes."[1]

At 6 a.m. the British barrage opened; but this time it was anticipated, by half an hour, by a German bombardment, which was to cover a German attack. The result was certainly trying, and gave rise to appreciable losses and to some anxiety as to how the troops, already crowded in their positions of assembly, would stand it. But when the moment came, the men,

[1] From a private diary.

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even those who had suffered from the enemy's fire, rose as one man, and advanced with great vigour.

There appears little doubt that the Germans had planned an attack on the I Anzac Corps, and timed it for the same hour as the British, although their barrage had begun half an hour earlier. But the meeting of the two sides in the open turned all in favour of the Anzacs. Nevertheless, in some contrast to their behaviour on September 20th, the Germans showed a far more spirited resistance in their pill-boxes.

First Objective Taken

At about 7 a.m. the first objective of the attack, the " Red Line," was in British hands. At 8.10 a.m., after four minutes' intense gun fire, the advance was resumed, and, as our infantry came up the ridge, the resistance stiffened. But the shocks already administered to the Germans had been such that this resistance was far from stubborn, and there was no counter-attack.

This circumstance, being in sharp contrast to the August battles, was an indication of how far the enemy had been shaken, and how far he felt that his tactics were failing. Promptly Ludendorff himself came to confer with his commanders. It was clear that German defensive methods needed revision, but equally clear that to do this with a battle in progress was an impossibility. Nevertheless, the Germans began moving their men into the front line again.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

YES—MUD AGAIN !

This time a Canadian official photograph of the lovely scene, showing men of the 16th Canadian Machine Gun Company, 4th Canadian Division, manning shell-holes on Passchendaele Ridge four days after the Second Battle of Passchendaele had drawn to a close (November 10th, 1917). Not the least of the many difficulties was that a shell-hole, empty when occupied, would often begin to fill gradually through seepage.

The two Anzac Corps and the 7th Division achieved steady progress in the centre, where the main objective lay. In fact, at every point good headway was made, the Germans holding out successfully only at " Daisy Wood," and in a line of sheltered pill-boxes which offered the New Zealanders a stout resistance, and had to be overcome one by one.

At length Broodseinde Ridge was won. Soon after 11 a.m. the British advance may be said to have been crowned with success. Even on the extreme left, where success, after all, was not so important, the 29th Division was in front of Poelcappelle, all its objectives in hand.

Everywhere the higher commanders were yearning to advance, and to exploit the great success whilst the enemy was still reeling under the blow. General Morland, commanding the X Corps, wished the 7th Division to push forward. General Godley, commanding the II Anzac, was of a like opinion. General Birdwood, of the I Anzac, was more cautiously disposed.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CLEANING UP

Such is the official description, but some may deem it a little optimistic. . . . Anyhow, this is a photograph of Canadian Pioneers " cleaning up " the battlefield and salving material after the advance which had won the ridge for their compatriots on November 6th. One wonders what the " victors " would have said, could they have foreseen that the ridge was to be abandoned again five months later.

The Battle Closes

Finally, at 2 p.m., Sir Herbert Plumer, of the Second Army, decided that no further advance should be attempted. The field guns were already firing at the extreme limit of their

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

COLLECTING THE WOUNDED

A stretcher-party of the 2nd Canadian Division bringing in wounded after the Battle of Broodseinde, which began and ended on October 4th, 1917. It required dexterity indeed to perform this work, for the treacherous ground was slippery as ice, and a false step into one of the pools would often cause a man to be sucked down inexorably to a horrible death. Should the stretcher and its occupant be jerked from the bearers' hands, the result may be imagined.

range, so that the barrage could not be pushed further. It was wiser to halt and to consolidate the gains. The XVIII Corps, indeed, at 5.10 p.m. made one attempt to push on. But it was beginning to rain; artillery support was lacking; and the Germans were recovering. The effort, in consequence, failed. Thus closed the Battle of Broodseinde, the last step of this remarkable British advance in Flanders.

The significance of the action, following on those fought within the previous fortnight, was not properly estimated at the moment, nor has been since. Obscured by the ghastly losses and suffering of August, eclipsed yet more totally by the horror of the succeeding weeks, the Battle of Broodseinde was, nevertheless, in reality one of the great achievements of the British Army in Flanders.

The Official Historian of Australia sums it up thus: "An overwhelming blow had been struck, and both sides knew it. The objective was the most important yet attacked by the Second and Fifth Armies, and they had again done almost exactly what they had planned to do. . . . This was the third blow struck at Ypres in fifteen days with complete success.

"It drove the Germans from one of the most important positions on the Western Front; notwithstanding their full knowledge that it was coming, they were completely powerless to withstand it . . . coming on top of the achievements of September 20th and 26th, its success was of an entirely different order."[1]

The enemy is equally candid: his *Official History* calls it "The Black Day of October 4th." Ludendorff, in his memoirs, states that it was "extraordinarily severe, and again we came through it only with enormous losses." More such successes, and a real exploitation of victory, might yet become feasible, it was thought, despite the lateness of the season. Provided good weather continued, the British progress might be such as would affect the whole outcome of the War. The victories of these 15 days, so different from the sanguinary "slogging-matches" of the Somme or of the preceding August at Ypres, held the germs of a success such as never before had been envisaged in any British attack.

A Cheering Thought

"For the first time in years, at noon on October 4th on the heights east of Ypres, British troops on the Western Front stood face to face with the possibility of decisive success."[2]

Neither in England nor in France do Haig's successes seem to have evoked much enthusiasm. Very different was the effect in Germany. "Divisions

[1] *Australian Official History*, iv, p. 875.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 877.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MAKING TRACKS

Yet another desolate scene, with Canadian Pioneers busy laying duckboard pathways over the treacherous expanse, while in the background wounded and prisoners pick their way back from the line. The Canadians took an important share in "Third Ypres"; and, what with this campaign and the Vimy battle of the previous spring, 1917 may be fitly called their "star" year on the Western Front.

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vanished by the dozen into the battle, only to emerge from that witch's cauldron, after a short period, weak and worn out, often reduced to a miserable remnant."[1] While in Prince Rupprecht's diary for October 11th there appears an entry: "Most perturbing is the fact that our troops are steadily deteriorating."

The Germans, in fact, had accepted a grave risk in not strengthening their Flanders front. In that decision, it is true, they had been fortified by the British failure during August to make any headway commensurate with losses. On the contrary, these losses may have lulled them into a state of false security. Now they were reduced to trusting to the weather; and Fate was to be kind.

Even among his own countrymen Haig's success was scarcely appreciated at its true value. In the Army, though some elation gained the upper hand, the disheartening effects of the terrible August were far from fully effaced. At home, the August casualty lists, so reminiscent of the worst days of the Somme, had reacted most unfavourably.

Yet although the British public never grasped the full import of what the Army had achieved, Mr. Lloyd George, who, since the autumn of 1917, had become Sir Douglas Haig's most bitter critic, seems to have been impressed. "Lloyd George has no illusions about Haig's victory of yesterday," so wrote Sir Henry Wilson in his diary for October 5th. That statement is fully borne out by the letter which Mr. Lloyd George addressed to the Commander-in-Chief in France. It is dated October 16th, and runs thus:

"The War Cabinet desires to congratulate you and the troops under your command upon the achievements of the British Armies in Flanders in the great battle which has been raging since 31st July.

"Starting in positions in which every advantage rested with the enemy, and hampered and delayed from time to time by most unfortunate weather, you and your men have nevertheless continuously driven the enemy back with such skill, courage and pertinacity as have commanded the admiration of the peoples of the British Empire and filled the enemy with alarm.

"I am personally glad to be the means of transmitting this message to you and to your gallant troops, and desire to take the opportunity of renewing my assurance of confidence in your leadership, and in the devotion of those whom you command.

"(Sd.) D. LLOYD GEORGE."

[1] Official monograph, *Flandern*, 1917.

Photo Imperial War Museum.

"AUSSIES" AT REST

While lorries rumble by on the road—a pleasantly dusty-looking one after the foregoing pictures of mud—a contingent of Australian troops takes a rest on the grass-clad bank during a march up to the line. This march was being carried out in connection with the opening of the Battle of Polygon Wood (September 26th—October 3rd), an engagement destined to be, with the exception of "Second Passchendaele," the longest of the eight "Third Ypres" battles. The six-day Battle of the Menin Road had ended only on September 25th.

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CHAPTER LXVIII

"THIRD YPRES": THE WEEKS OF HORROR

In November, 1917, the fighting at Passchendaele gradually died down; and thus was brought to a conclusion one of the bloodiest battles in history. The casualties on both sides were heavy, and the conditions under which the armies fought appalling. To men who took part in this test of endurance, "Third Wipers" will ever remain as a nightmare memory.

After his success at Broodseinde, Sir Douglas Haig was not blind to the task that lay ahead, nor to the difficulty of selecting the right course of action. "We are far enough on now to stop for the winter. . . . Unless we get fine weather all this month, there is no chance of clearing the coast. . . . Anyhow, there are reasons far more vital than our own interests here that give us no option: it is a tremendous responsibility for Haig."[1] Thus wrote the chief of the Intelligence Branch of the situation at that moment.

A Momentous Move

Haig, indeed, was faced with making the most momentous decision of his career. Still haunted by the fear of a collapse of the French Army, and impelled by the declaration of the Admiralty that the Belgian coast must be cleared of the Germans, he pondered deeply on the problem, and at last gave the order to continue the advance.

It had been the original plan, after the Battle of Broodseinde, to pursue the attack on Passchendaele in two steps: the first to take place on October 10th, and the second on October 13th. The former was to be a very limited affair, whilst the latter was planned on a more ambitious scale, and was to penetrate far more deeply into the enemy's lines.

These operations, it was expected, would result in the capture of Passchendaele itself by the II Anzac Corps. Next, a further, lesser attack on Westroosebeke might be launched on the 14th. From that point the final move towards Roulers, on the Belgian plain, might begin. It was, in fact, a far-reaching scheme, but to Haig, planning such an advance between September 26th and the first days of October, such progress seemed practicable.

However, there is little doubt that the Field-Marshal was unduly confident as to the deterioration of the German morale. It might, indeed, have just been possible to advance as far as he wished by October 10th, provided the weather were kind enough to allow of rapid progress across the muddy zone. This was the true problem before Haig: how to get through that belt of awful ground in the face of shortening days, colder weather, and possible rain-storms. It was chiefly a matter for the road-makers and railway-builders, since any movement off the planked roads would soon be perfectly impossible, and these experts, although hopeful, were far from confident.

Nevertheless, as late as the early days of October Haig was still content with the idea of moving forward slowly and surely; and it was only later that he began to make plans for a more rapid advance, and to bank on a complete breakdown of the German morale. However, he soon began to insist on the need to take provisional measures for the "exploitation" of any success that might be gained.

Foiled by the Weather

It is true that the battle of October 4th had shown considerable confusion to prevail among the enemy, and that our Intelligence Branch was confident that no properly-formed division could have intervened on the field for two days. But Haig's bolder policy could be justified only on that one condition—good weather; and it was precisely that condition which was lacking.

"I believe that if the weather had only held on another two or three weeks we would have had Fritz well on the run in Flanders, and would have had numerous opportunities of following him up and further knocking him about with our Cavalry. Now I fear that it must be a wash-out for the year—tough luck, but we've got to take things as they are, and keep plugging away. . . ."[1] The above fairly represents the whole situation. All hope of a strategic victory vanished with the rains.

Yet the official attitude still remained that "Passchendaele ridge is so important that to-morrow's attack is worth making whether it succeeds or fails. . . . I suspect that they are making a great, bloody experiment—a huge gamble. . . . I feel, and most of the correspondents feel . . . terribly anxious. . . . They are banking on their knowledge of German demoralisation."[1]

Already, on October 4th, it had begun to rain intermittently. Then on the 8th favourable drying breezes set in, which promptly raised hopes of better things. But on that very same evening there descended a torrential downpour; and the fates decreed that the launching of our next attack should coincide with a complete break in the weather. In view of the adverse conditions, the British attacks as planned by Haig could never hope to materialise. The crossing of the ground beyond the planked roads became a risky, if not highly dangerous, enterprise. Lorries, ambulances, even the lightest vehicles, slithered and skidded off the tracks to destruction.

A Miserable Business

More difficult still was the task of getting forward the artillery. "To begin with, the finding of any patch of ground which guns could possibly reach, and from which they would be able to fire more than two or three rounds without sinking into the mud, proved an arduous task, while the work of preparing platforms and shelters on the positions, when chosen, involved not only great labour, but a still greater patience."[2] The H.A.C. siege battery took two whole days to move its 6-inch howitzers 200 yards away from a planked road.

The attack, originally planned for October 10th, was now timed for October 9th, and the fighting which ensued became known as the Battle of

[1] Charteris, *At G.H.Q.*

[1] Private letter quoted in *Australian Official History*, iv, p. 883.

[1] From the notebook of a participator at staff conference, October 7th, *Australian Official History*, iv, p. 884.

[2] Filgate, *33rd Div. Artillery*, pp. 112–14.

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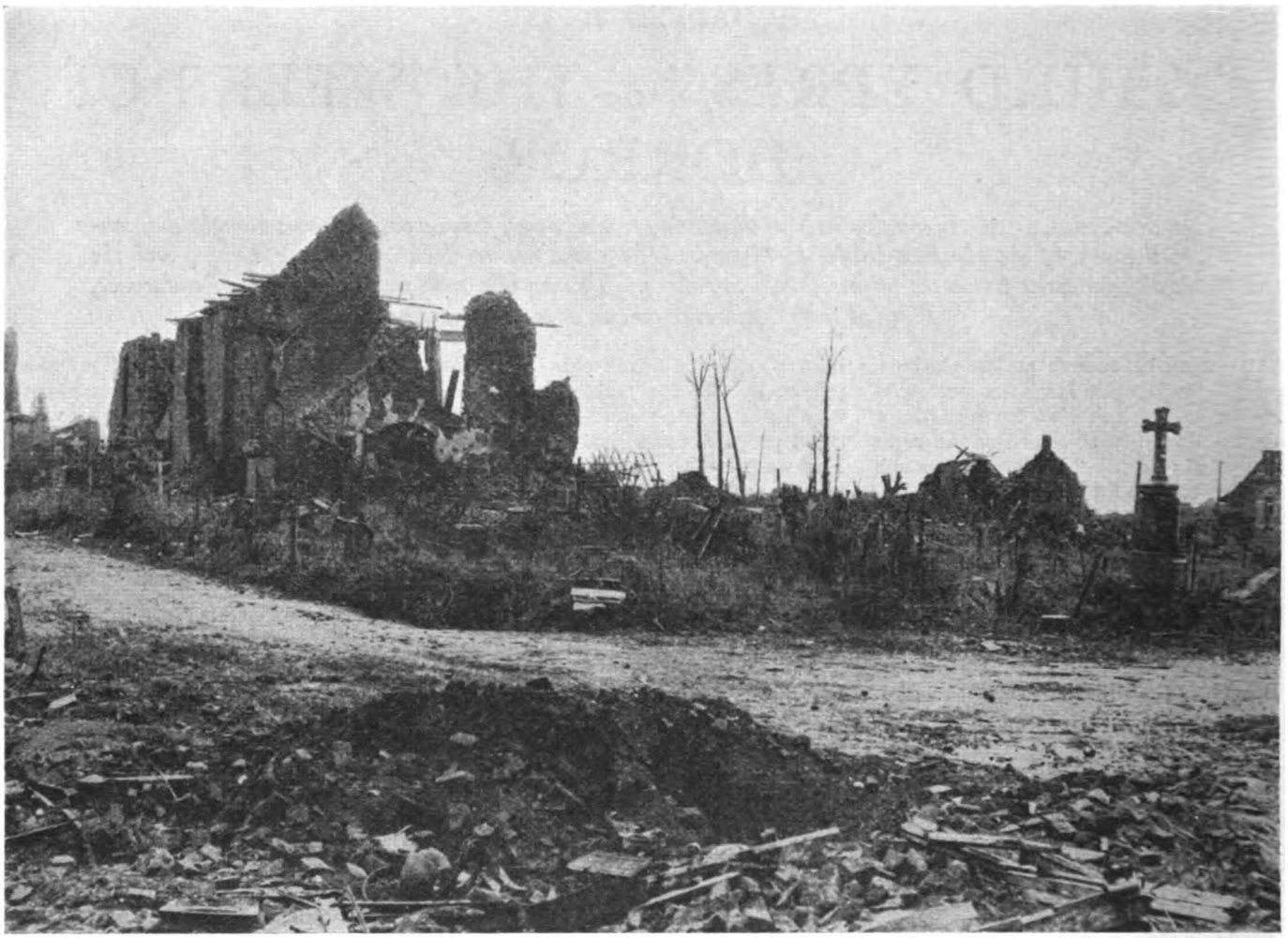

DISMEMBERED STRAZEELE

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

On pages 1082 and 1083 we showed Strazeele station in old and new guise. Here are two views of the church and some of the houses which amply bear out the statement that the post-war village has been rebuilt out of all knowledge. A well-known soldier-author who was here in that dire April of 1918 describes in pungent terms how he once saw two streams of transport crossing one another in Strazeele, while wounded civilians and soldiers lay here, there, and everywhere upon the pavements, awaiting ambulances to take them away to hospital.

Poelcapelle.[1] "The village, or rather, the wreckage, of Poelcapelle showed up on the drab mournful landscape after three years of war's ruthlessness. But its one-time girdle of pleasant farms had been blotted out. Their names survived to distinguish grassless pastures that now grew nothing but machine guns.

"The main approach to Poelcapelle, the Langemarck road, was more than hard to find. Intelligence officers trying to trace it turned geologists and sought in shell-holes for fragments of the road-metal as the best clue to its direction. To cross the oozy wilderness one followed the tortuous tracks of semi-submerged duckboards. There were five miles of them to the front line. One Berks officer declared that he walked 500 miles over duckboards during the Poelcapelle period."[2]

[1] In the Flemish language Poelcapelle means "the church in the bog."

[2] Nichols, *The 18th Division*, p. 234.

The artillery preparation was reputedly going to be on a similar scale to that which had proved so successful in the previous battles. The barrage was to open at 5.20 a.m., which was the hour for the infantry to begin its advance. The latter was to be carried out (from right to left) by the I Anzac Corps (subsidiary flank attack); II Anzac Corps, 66th and 49th (British) Divisions; XVIII Corps, 48th and 11th Divisions; XIV Corps, 4th, 29th, and Guards Divisions. The X Corps on the right, and the French on the left, were to support the outer flanks of the movement.

Trials of the 66th Division

From the very outset the 60th and 49th Divisions were faced with appalling conditions. The former division, an untried formation, cannot be said to have been equal to such a difficult undertaking. A night-march which, under normal conditions, would have taken 1½ hours, now occupied no less than 11½ hours; and even so the battalion arrived at the start 1½ hours late. Luckily the German resistance proved negligible, and so this seemingly hopeless advance reached Passchendaele ridge. Unfortunately it was all but unsupported on either flank, for here the barrage had failed.

The 49th Division, in spite of gallant attempts, could make but insufficient headway. Fortunately the XVIII and XIV Corps—in particular the latter—found progress easier, and this circumstance somewhat redeemed the situation. In fact, the advance of the French divisions and of the XIV Corps on the left flank, may have blinded the High Command to the far less satisfactory state of things in the centre.

Nevertheless, even though Haig was by now more resigned to abandoning

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

PUT TOGETHER AGAIN

It was in front of Strazeele that on April 12th, 1918, the Germans forced their way into our lines and seized Outtersteene and Merris, two neighbouring villages. Our line was reformed, and a serious break-through averted, by the frantic efforts of a brigade of the 33rd Division, a body of cyclists, a Pioneer battalion, a number of signallers, and every available reinforcement from schools and reserve camps. To-day there is no British cemetery at Strazeele, and the item of chief interest is a memorial in the churchyard marking the spot where in 1914 the village *curé* was shot by the Germans.

his somewhat over-ambitious views, there is reason to believe that General Headquarters as a whole were not really cognisant of the conditions on the front; they certainly ignored the fact that the enemy had made successful efforts to strengthen the weaker elements among his front-line troops.

General Gough was adverse to continuing the attack, realising clearly that the amount of ground gained at the centre of the attack was not enough. Plumer, however, was in favour of pushing ahead. The question for him seemed to resolve itself into where the Second Army could halt for the winter. The high ground ahead appeared to offer the safest and driest line, so he wished to push on. In the II Anzac Corps, the 3rd Australian and New Zealand Divisions were to replace the 66th and 49th Divisions for a renewed attempt.

The Programme Speeded Up

On October 10th, Haig gave the order for the next attack to take place on the 12th. But it seemed to be forgotten that there would thus be only two days in which to prepare for the venture, while the next "step" would entail an advance of over 2,000 yards—twice the distance covered on the 9th. General Birdwood, commanding I Anzac Corps, pointed out that even his seasoned divisions were coming to the limit of their endurance; but as his corps was carrying out only a subsidiary operation, he finally consented to play his part.

The effect of this acceleration of programme reacted yet more unfavourably on the gunners. It being physically impossible for the artillery to move its pieces in the appalling mud, it was small wonder that the counter-battery work deteriorated to such an extent that it became a subject for astonishment even among the enemy. The batteries, too, were short-handed; casualties and increasing sickness had taken so heavy a toll that the artillery was incapable of lending the solid assistance to the infantry which had been so marked a feature of the Battles of the Menin Road and of Broodseinde. On October 12th, many guns were lying out of action, bogged or overturned in shell-holes.

The whole condition of the battlefield was now not only impossible but was verging on the macabre:

"Front trenches meant a zig-zag of scattered shell-craters. A particularly large hole protected by a hurdle might be a battalion headquarters, a lesser hole might hold the leader of a company. The difficulty of conveying orders or of allotting objectives in such circumstances needs no emphasis, yet

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NEAR ARRAS

These ruins are in the village of St. Laurent-Blangy, which lies just north of Blangy proper, and just east of Arras. The Scarpe flows between the two Blangys. St. Laurent-Blangy was attacked on April 9th, 1917, at the outset of the Battle of Arras, by the 9th (Scottish and South African) Division, which soon captured it; and thereafter it remained in our possession. The above photograph was taken on June 30th, 1917.

seldom did it receive sufficient allowance in high places. Strictly speaking, the campaigning season was over. In a tongue of water-logged territory hemmed in by the enemy on two sides and dominated by the concentrated German artillery, the British Army groped and floundered."[1]

"Weather conditions made it impossible to keep the men in the front line for more than a few days at a time, and in the posts of the picket and support line the stay was limited to two days. So great was the difficulty of bringing up supplies that the men occupying these points brought their two days' rations with them."[2]

Waking up in a Bath of Water

The finding of a bit of dry shelter became a problem. Everywhere the ground was a quagmire. Some men of the 5th Division on the right flank, "in an endeavour to improve matters, decided to dig in on a high piece of ground outside and thus be safer from shell fire, bombs, and the general wet conditions. They settled themselves comfortably for the night, but on waking in the morning they were disagreeably surprised to find they were lying in six inches of water, which had percolated through the earth. So that, even on comparatively high ground, one was never free from the eternal water and mud."[1]

The captured pill-boxes were a favourite refuge—at first sight they appeared to be safe and dry. But they "certainly had drawbacks, for their scanty cover always attracted people towards them, and those who could not find accommodation inside would crouch near the doors or on the side farthest away from the enemy. Inside the pill-boxes, which were usually small, accommodation for a company headquarters was very limited. So crowded did it seem that one could neither lie nor sit up straight. With the exceptionally wet weather, the bottom became covered with a pool of water, necessitating continual baling out. As these miniature forts had been captured from the Germans, the doorway faced towards the wrong way, and enemy snipers were continually on the alert to pick off men who tried to enter or leave."[1]

"I got to one pill-box to find it just a mass of dead, and so I passed on carefully to the one ahead. Here I found about fifty men alive, of the Manchesters. Never have I seen men so broken or so demoralised. They were huddled up close behind the box in the last stages of exhaustion and fear. Fritz had been sniping them

[1] Nichols, *The 18th Division*, p. 234.
[2] Atteridge, *The 17th Division*, p. 257.

[1] Fairclough, *1st Birmingham Battalion*, pp. 116–17.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 122–3.

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off all day, and had accounted for fifty-seven that day—the dead and dying lay in piles. The wounded were numerous—unattended and weak, they groaned and moaned all over the place . . . some had been there four days already."[1]

Ignorance of Conditions

The conditions were growing so bad as to render it improbable that any further attack could succeed. But still Haig persisted, and in his attitude he was undoubtedly supported by Sir Herbert Plumer and also by General Godley, commanding the II Anzac Corps. It can only be imagined that the two latter were really unaware as to the dreadful conditions on the actual battlefield. At a conference of Press correspondents held on October 11th, Haig declared, "It was simply the mud that defeated us on Tuesday. The men did splendidly to get through as they did."

An interesting commentary is to be found in the chief of the Intelligence section's diary, kept during these days:

"Oct. 5th. Unless we get fine weather all this month, there is now no chance of clearing the coast. . . .

"Oct. 8th. Unless we have a very great success to-morrow, it is the end for this year as far as Flanders is concerned. With a great success to-morrow, and a few more weeks, we may still clear the coast and win the war before Christmas. It is not impossible, but it is pouring again to-day.

"Oct. 10th. There is now no chance of complete success here this year."[1]

It was under such grim conditions that the First Battle of Passchendaele was fought on October 12th. The battle was planned to cover three successive objectives: first, the "Red Line"—virtually the second objective of the previous battle—entailing a move of 1,200 yards; secondly, the "Blue Line," which lay nearly 1,000 yards farther on, and was really a jumping-off place for the attack on the village; thirdly, the "Green Line," which lay a quarter of a mile beyond Passchendaele itself. The village was to be carried by the 3rd Australian and the New Zealand Divisions.

On the night of October 11th, Gough endeavoured to have the attempt postponed; but General Plumer, after consulting the Corps commanders, was of opinion that the attack must proceed.

Too Ambitious to Succeed

It poured with rain until 4.20 a.m. At 5.25 the barrage opened. As on

[1] Letter from Lieut. W. G. Fisher, 44th Australian Btn., quoted in *Australian Official History*.

Charteris, *At G.H.Q.*

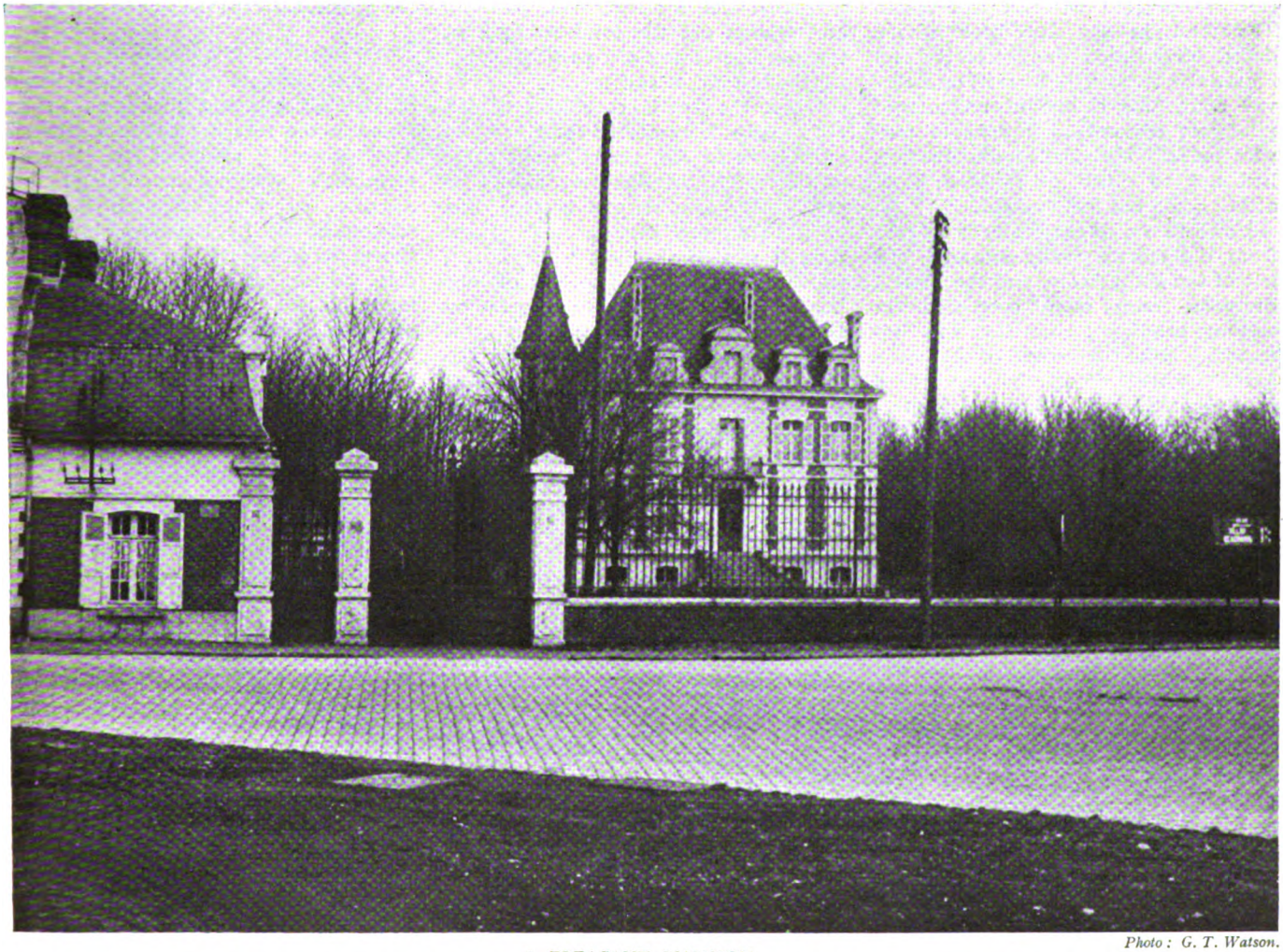

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A PLEASANT MANSION

A certain mystery surrounds this pair of illustrations. Our photographer, seeking the site of the War picture, in order to take its modern complement, showed it to a "well-spoken civilian," who declared with enthusiasm that he had been in St. Laurent-Blangy throughout the War, and recognised the ruins in the 1917 photograph for those of a certain château. On the other hand, the official caption to the war-time view alludes merely to "ruins in the village." . . . Above is the modest new château which the Frenchman declared to be on the site of the old.

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the 9th, it was far too thin ; so much so that the advancing infantry at times could not tell whether the shells bursting in front came from their own artillery or from that of the enemy. The ambitious programme never stood a chance of realisation. It had been intended that the " Green Line " should be reached by noon, but in the end not even the " Red Line " was secured.

The 3rd Australian Division started gaily enough ; in fact, it actually made its way as far as the ruins of the village church. But then the Germans came to life again on the Bellevue spur, which runs away west from Passchendaele, and raked the advance so severely that the Australians were driven back.

By noon the position was serious. At 3 p.m. the New Zealanders were ordered to make a second attempt on the village. But they failed, just as the Australians and, three days earlier, the 49th Division had failed. The mud in the Ravebeek ravine defied description and created an impassable barrier. Above it, on Bellevue spur, was a line of undamaged pill-boxes covered by aprons of new wire which the inadequate barrage had not so much as touched. The attack could but fail, and did.

Nowhere on the remainder of the front did success really matter. The left of the Fifth Army, and the French divisions, once more succeeded in making headway ; but this was immaterial, since the success of the whole battle centred round the capture of Passchendaele. So, when the Australians and New Zealanders had failed, there was no value and no sense in pushing on elsewhere ; and thus ended this ill-starred enterprise.

The state of things on the higher ground was just endurable. Farther back, on the lower levels, it became agony. The artillery, in particular, suffered as it had at no time suffered during the entire War.

The Artillery's Worst Trial

" The batteries had no daily life, but rather a daily death, while their experiences—day in, day out—were invariably the same. Morning, noon, and night, the men were splashing about in mud, trying to keep their ammunition clean and their guns serviceable ; daily they were shelled, sometimes with long deliberate bombardments, sometimes in hurricane shell-storms which descended upon them for forty minutes or so two or three times a day.

" They were always wet, always cold ; they continually saw the guns and ammunition, which they had spent hours in cleaning and preparing, blown to bits in the passing of a second ; they helped to bring up more guns, more ammunition, and saw, in the serving of these new guns, their mates blown to pieces, shattered, torn. They grew to believe that relief would never come, that for a time they must exist in the grim shadow of Maple Copse, of Fosse Wood, and of Armagh Wood. They felt, as they saw the shells crashing down all around them, that they were forgotten by God and man. . . .

" The losses of the batteries in this autumn fighting had been appalling. For they had been in continuous action under the worst conditions, covering attack after attack and undergoing interminable shell-fire from enemy guns of every calibre. The smallest possible personnel was kept at each position, and seldom did the total strength at the gun line of any one battery exceed thirty-six officers and men.

" Yet the battle casualties of the 162nd Brigade numbered three hundred and fifteen for this period, while those of the 156th Brigade were almost as great. A/156, a six-gun battery, had twenty-six guns disabled during the time it was in the line, while D/162, which had suffered the loss of one hundred and six casualties including six officers, had had nineteen guns put out of action by the enemy. The batteries had, in fact, been practically wiped out, and it was a mere remnant of their former selves which reached the waggon-lines. They had marched up the Salient a fine fighting weapon, the outcome of many months' training and experience, hardened and versed in all the methods of war. They came away from the murderous spot smashed, depleted, worn out, their work accomplished, but at a tremendous cost.

" Ypres was no longer to them a legendary spot, but a plain, ghastly reality, a grim and deadly place where the batteries learnt, as they had never learnt before, the full horrors of war." [1]

A Sarcastic Retort

The infantry was likewise in a sad predicament. " The great problem was how to keep rifles and machine guns clean ; on more than one occasion our men had been forced to give ground because their rifle bolts jammed owing to mud so that they could not be fired." Did the High Command realise what the troops were enduring ? It seems doubtful. There was more than sarcasm in the reply to an Army Commander at this period when he issued his valedictory order to a Scottish division on leaving his Army : " The Commander of the —— Army bids good-bye to the . . . Division with great regret. Its reputation has been earned on many battlefields, and has never stood higher than now. He wishes it all good fortune and many further successes in the future. 'Will ye no' come back again ? ' "

While this message was appreciated by its recipients, the reply was obvious. One battalion records that the unanimous answer was contained in three words, " No b——y fear ! " The diarist concludes, " The Army Commander was simply asking for it ! " [1] No : these orthodox official pronouncements and communiqués no longer rang true ; they no longer bore any relation to the grim realities of the war in the mud !

Reviving German Morale

A more serious result of the failures of October 9th and 12th was to be found in the reviving German morale. The shattering effect of the " great fortnight's " victories was passing away. Already, on the 12th, the German resistance on the Bellevue spur had shown the enemy that he need fear little from attacks delivered across an unnavigable sea of mud and covered by ineffective artillery barrages.

Haig himself realised the situation. " By this time the persistent continuation of the wet weather had left no further room for hope that the condition of the ground would improve sufficiently to enable us to capture the remainder of the ridge this year. By limited attacks made during intervals of bad weather, however, it would still be possible to progress as far as Passchendaele, and, in view of the other projects which I had in view, it was desirable to maintain the pressure on the Flanders front for a few weeks longer.

" To maintain his defence on this front the enemy had been obliged to reduce the garrison of certain parts of his line to a degree which justified the expectation that a sudden attack at a point where he did not expect it might attain a considerable local success. The front for such an attempt had been selected." [2]

The " other projects " were no less than the great tank-attack of Cambrai,

[1] Filgate, *33rd Div. Artillery*, pp. 129, 133-4.

[1] Stewart and Buchan, *The Fifteenth (Scottish) Division*, p. 187.

[2] Despatch ; quoted by O'Neill, *Royal Fusiliers*, p. 199.

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Specially drawn.

BADGES—SELECTION FOUR

Beginning in the top left-hand corner, and reading horizontally: 1—Middlesex Yeomanry (1st County of London). 2—Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry. 3—Loyal Suffolk Hussars. 4—Royal North Devon Hussars. 5—Worcestershire Hussars. 6—West Kent Yeomanry. 7—West Somerset Yeomanry. 8—Oxfordshire Hussars. 9—Montgomery Yeomanry. 10—Lothian and Border Horse. 11—Queen's Own Royal Glasgow Yeomanry. 12—Lancashire Hussars. 13—Surrey Yeomanry. 14—Fife and Forfar Yeomanry. 15—Norfolk Yeomanry. 16—Sussex Yeomanry. 17—Glamorgan Yeomanry. 18—Welsh Horse. 19—Lincolnshire Yeomanry. 20—City of London Yeomanry (Roughriders).

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which will be dealt with hereafter. Haig unquestionably desired to continue his pressure on Passchendaele, for Pétain had informed him that he proposed to carry out a "limited attack" at Malmaison on October 23rd, with a view to testing the reviving morale of his army. The Italian front, also, was beginning to give rise to some thought; while the complete collapse of Russia would enable Ludendorff to move troops westwards.

Moved by such considerations, Haig now ordered the Canadian Corps to relieve the II Anzac Corps before Passchendaele on October 22nd. In spite of the weather, he still proposed to reduce that German stronghold by deliberate steps, as and when the meteorological conditions allowed. The I Anzac Corps would cover the Canadian right, whilst the II Anzac would, after a short rest, relieve the X Corps on the right of the I Anzac.

Nothing could take place for the next fortnight. The conditions as a whole were much what they had been on the Somme one year earlier, although the dry ground round Broodseinde, together with the roads which had been constructed, by dint of strenuous effort, up to that point, rendered the position of the I Anzac more endurable than that of the participants in the earlier struggle.

Conditions in rear never grew any better: rather, infinitely worse. The casualties among the engineers and pioneers who toiled at road-building were nearly equalling those of the infantry; while the continual shelling of the back areas, particularly with mustard-gas shells, was characteristic of the warfare of this period, and responsible for heavy casualties, even in certain so-called rest-billets.

Plans for "Second Passchendaele"

At length the Canadians were in line, and plans were promptly drawn up for the attack on Passchendaele. The assault itself, officially known as "Second Passchendaele," started on October 26th, and constituted the initial move in the last and most trying of these October battles.

Both the plan and the course of events bore so strong a resemblance to "First Passchendaele" as to render any further description of the fighting all but superfluous. The advance was planned to take place in three stages, and to start at 5.40 a.m. The X Corps on the right, and the Canadian Corps, advanced. On the X Corps' front

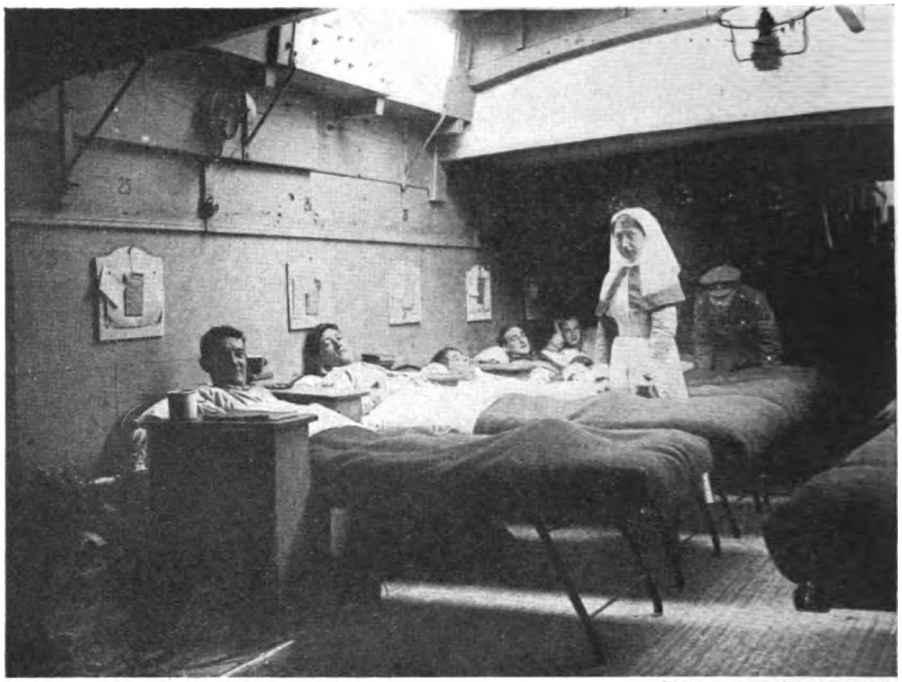

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN A FLOATING WARD

A photograph showing the interior of a ward in a hospital barge near Aire, February 14th, 1918. The sundry advantages of conveying wounded by water have been mentioned much earlier in *Twenty Years After*, and here we need do no more than remind ex-soldiers of the smoothness of this form of travel compared with overland methods. Probably a number of readers can corroborate this from their own experience.

Gheluvelt village and the long-contested Polderhoek spur were carried; but these gains could not be held in the teeth of powerful German counter-attacks.

The 3rd Canadian Division succeeded

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN A WARD AT WIMEREUX

The interior of Ward "E," 32nd Stationary Hospital, Wimereux. This village, Boulogne's next-door neighbour on the northern side, was among the places which maintained a more than semi-British character for several years after the Armistice. Now a fashionable holiday resort, in the early 1920's it was a dilapidated village with scarcely a hotel, and with British lorries, old signboards, encampments, etc., everywhere in evidence.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

JOURNALISTS AND WOUNDED

A somewhat unusual photograph, showing (*left*) a group of Dominion journalists watching wounded being taken aboard a hospital ship at Calais on September 2nd, 1918. Note the German stretcher-bearers in the foreground. By the date in question our final offensive was well under way, and the prisoners taken were already sufficiently numerous to cause something of a problem to their captors. Many wounded were included.

in effecting a lodgment on the north side of the Bellevue spur, and from that point slowly captured one pill-box after another; but the 4th Canadian Division, although fighting splendidly, fared almost exactly as the Australians had previously done. Misunderstandings arose; troops were in consequence withdrawn; the Germans counter-attacked, precisely as had happened a fortnight earlier; and in the end the Canadians, believing that their right flank was in the air, fell back as night approached.

Their situation was not enviable. Passchendaele had to be taken—that much was clear, for the position of the British would be unsatisfactory, if not unendurable were it to remain as it was. Moreover, the front of attack was now being limited; and with that limitation, all the vices of the Somme battle were coming to light again. How different from the attacks on a wide front, supported by an overwhelming artillery barrage, which had characterised the battles of late September!

The conditions were growing worse, as witness this account: "From Potijze a plank roadway, built on top of the original road, leads forward through a network of supply dumps and battery positions to the front-line area. No communication trenches exist in the swampy ground. The sole means of communication, forward of roads and light railways, are the winding duck-walks that sway drunkenly over the shell-torn ground or drop out of sight, knee-deep in the mud.

Men Drowned in Mud

"Men who slip off these tracks may be engulfed in the bottomless mire. Along the paths are dead mules by the score. Farther back along the plank road, trucks, tanks, guns, and impedi-ments lie, shattered and discarded—mute evidences of the terrific wastage in transport and armament. The landscape boils, as great shells 'plop' in the sea of mud, their incessant detona-tions smothered in showers of slush and mighty spouts of water.

"Almost daily the Canadian artillery, blown out of their positions, move their guns to new sites. Wheel to wheel, the guns hammer frantically, steadily, at the positions to be taken. Perpetually in action, guns wear out—are replaced. On all sides are disabled pieces, sunk to their muzzles in mud. Despite terrible handicaps, the Canadian gunners achieve miracles. Guns are man-handled to new positions. Officers, N.C.O.'s, bat-men, cooks—all work fiercely without thought of rank or privilege, shoring up the ponderous carriages, straining on drag ropes, carrying ammunition. . . .

"It is told: a Canadian battery commander has laboured for hours to shore up his steadily sinking guns. Hollow-eyed, he gazes at a great pool

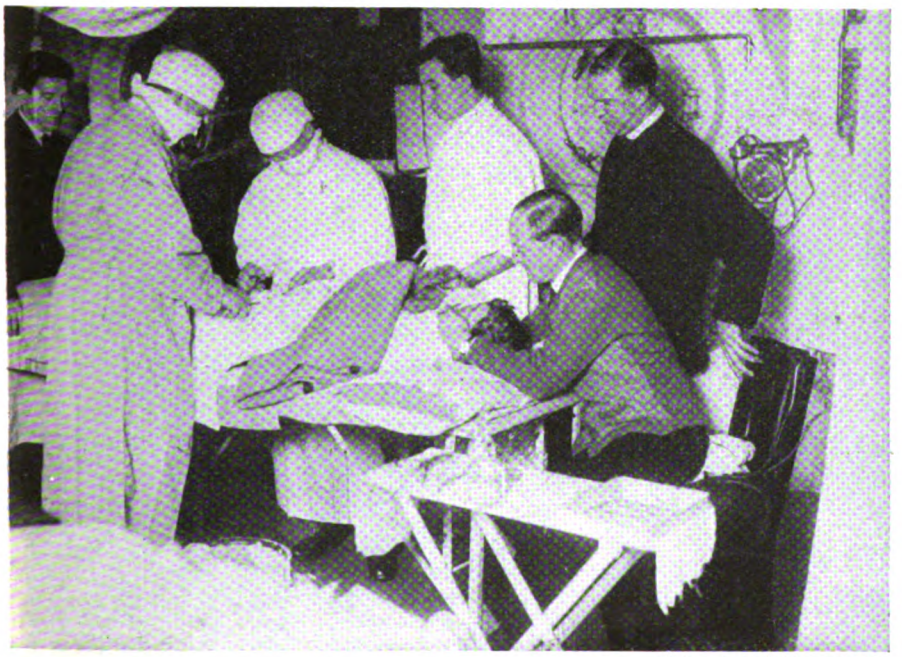

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PERFORMING AN OPERATION

Administering the anæsthetic preparatory to operating on a badly-wounded man aboard the Australian battle-cruiser *Australia*. The seriousness of the operation is evident from the presence of the chaplain. H.M.A.S. *Australia* had been responsible, in 1914, for taking possession of German New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago (New Britain), in the Pacific. She rejoined her fellow battle-cruisers at Rosyth in February, 1915.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SHORT AND SWEET

This sugar-refinery in Boiry-Ste. Rictrude, although not old when the War began, was reduced by 1917 to a shapeless mass of wreckage. We have already illustrated the refinery once (pages 842–3), but the repetition here is due to an interesting circumstance. The new sugar-refinery, illustrated on page 843, is 2 km. from the old—

AGRICULTURE OUSTS INDUSTRY

—and where the old one used to stand are now a mansion and a farm, as shown below. As soon as the War was over, an enterprising farmer took over the ruins seen above, and was able to construct from them, with very little additional material, a commodious farmhouse and an up-to-date farm on the exact site of the refinery.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RAZED TO THE GROUND—

The village of Locon, of which a badly-disintegrated portion is seen above, stands on the left bank of the River Lawe 5½ km. north-north-east of Béthune. Here, on April 12th, 1918, the 3rd Division was heavily assaulted, and was eventually forced to give ground to the neighbourhood of Hinges. The enemy in consequence captured Locon.

—AND NOW RAISED FROM IT

The 3rd Division which so gallantly met the attack of April 12th, 1918, at Locon, was already battle-weary, having just been moved up from south of Arras, where it had been undergoing several days' continuous fighting. Yet this division and its neighbours to northward, the 51st and 61st, were responsible for a definite check to the enemy's progress.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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of soup-like slime in which timbers float drearily. His phone rings. Disconsolately he turns to hear a frantic voice, 'That Captain Smith?—Well, sir, we got your message, but there ain't no more men to send up, only me an' the battery clerk, sir'—a pause, then—'Is there anything else I can do, sir?' Wearily Captain Smith replies, 'Yes, phone the Forestry Corps—see if they can spare any good river men!!'"[1]

In the front line the infantry fared no better: "Drenched with gas, the forward companies hang on. Gas respirators are worn as long as they can be endured. Officers and N.C.O.'s, compelled to discard respirators in order to carry on the work of reconnaissance, vomit frequently from the effects of the gas. But the positions of the companies are maintained, and deliberate preparations for the forthcoming attack go forward."[1]

[1] Russenholt, *44th Batt. Canadian Light Infantry*, p. 119.

Enemy Guns on Top

On October 27th, a successful minor operation ejected the enemy from Decline Copse, from which he was threatening any further advance on the right. The British artillery struggled hard to gain some supremacy over the enemy guns; but their reply only took the form of a vicious concentration of fire on our front lines.

The 30th October broke more favourably. It was very cold, and a high wind was blowing. At 5.53 a.m. the Canadian Corps once more attacked, supported by the XVIII Corps on its left. The divisions in the front line ran as follows: 1st Australian, 4th Canadian, 3rd Canadian, 63rd. The conditions were terrible—perhaps worse in front of the 63rd than elsewhere. Some ground was won, and the "Blue Line" was gained. The 3rd Canadian Division was fiercely counter-attacked no less than five times, but held on; and thus concluded the first stage of the battle.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

On November 6th, the advance was renewed by the Canadian and X Corps. Some slight headway was again made.

Finally, at 6.5 a.m. on November 10th, a final desperate effort was made by the Canadian and II Corps. The divisions employed were the 2nd Canadian, 1st Canadian, and 1st British. This attack proceeded more favourably, and ended with the attainment of all the objectives, including Passchendaele village. At last a halt could be called! "If the Canadians can hold on they are wonderful troops." Thus wrote an Australian officer. They did hold on. And so closed the ghastly struggle in the mud.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FOUR MEN AND A TANK

Dated September 22nd, 1917, this illustration shows four men in a well-hidden trench east of Zillebeke, during a period before the rain had managed to transform the pitted earth of this particular region into a quagmire. At this time the Battle of the Menin Road, or of the Menin Road Ridge, as it is sometimes called, had been in process for nearly three days, and was destined to continue another three (September 20th—25th). Zillebeke and its lake lie a mile south of the Menin Road, and eastward from them runs Observatory Ridge.

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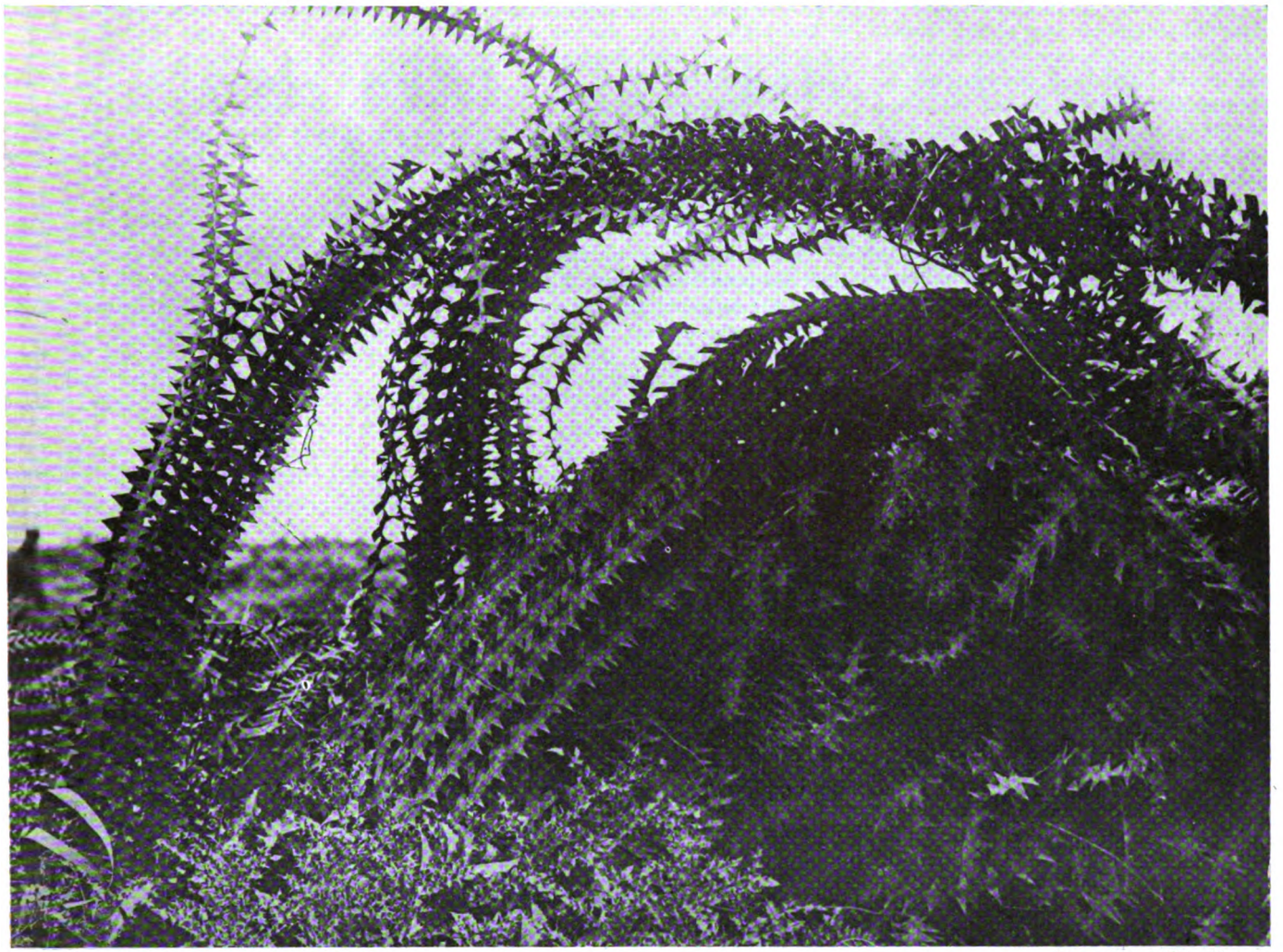

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LIKE A GROWTH OF NATURE

Strangely like a species of bracken or bramble is this jungle of German barbed wire on the battlefield near Arras. As many know, this entanglement —which in reality does not consist of wire at all, but of a number of narrow metal strips with jagged borders—presents an obstacle no less daunting than the more familiar variety; and it is interesting to study the photograph in connection with the formidable barriers visible in the aerial photograph of the Hindenburg Line on page 1052.

The Allied plan in its wider aspect had undoubtedly failed. But so had the German submarine menace. Accordingly the situation, as a whole, was one which it was possible to call "Honours easy!" Nevertheless, from another standpoint it is difficult to say how far the actual results of this protracted fighting were worth the result. History must decide. The cost to the British had been heavy—some 400,000 casualties, of which close on 40,000 were Australian, over 16,000 Canadian. The finest fighting material on the British side was fast disappearing.

Germany's Priceless Store

The same might be said of the Germans; but Germany could still draw on that priceless reservoir of war-trained troops in the East. Already reinforcements were appearing on the Italian front, where on October 24th six German Divisions, reinforcing the Austrian Army, smashed the Italian front at Caporetto, thereby initiating a collapse which all but brought Italy to her knees.[1] Other reinforcements from the same source were to make themselves felt at Cambrai less than a month later.

Had the whole of the "Third Ypres" battles been fought on the same plan as Messines, or as those which occurred between September 20th and October 4th, the story might have been very different. But the revival of the faulty methods pursued at the Somme, coupled with the appalling weather conditions, destroyed all the fairest hopes of success, while they discounted the value of these operations.

It is needless to say more than that the basic ideas underlying the Flanders battles may be deemed correct. But they were put into practice too late in the year, were rendered too costly owing to a faulty technique of battle, and, finally, were killed by the weather —this latter circumstance being due to the lateness in making a start.

It may be some consolation to think that "heroism on a grander scale has never been shown than in the brutal fighting on the foul quagmires of Flanders. Often neck-deep in mud, the men floundered forward until their overtaxed limbs could no longer support them, and to wrest victory under such appalling conditions was a task beyond the power of man."[1]

Despite the hostile criticism which has been levelled against it, the Flanders fighting unquestionably succeeded *in*

Goold Walker, *History of the H.A.C.*

[1] This momentous episode will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

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its main object. In that conclusion all impartial writers are now of one accord.

Whether or not any other strategic plan could have been adopted to immobilise the Germans during the latter part of 1917 is immaterial; whether or not the tactical methods were appropriate may be left out of account in appraising the net results of this dreadful struggle. Neither is it just to emphasise the horrors of the "campaign in the mud," whilst ignoring its military significance in the broadest aspect of the War.

Miscalculation and Blunders

That there was miscalculation may be freely admitted; that grave blunders were committed will never be denied. But these facts are no justification for calumniating the memory of those who sought to give of their best for the good of the Allied cause. Rather is it possible to agree with Rudyard Kipling when he wrote: [1]

> "No easy hopes or lies
> Shall bring us to our goal,
> But iron sacrifice
> Of body, will, and soul."

Let us conclude by quoting two of the most weighty opinions emitted by our enemy of that day.

"There remained to the Allies as their one positive gain from the Flanders battle the certainty that by tying down the Germans under intensely severe strain, they survived the crisis which arose in the interval between the breakdown of Russia, the onset of the unlimited submarine campaign, and the reverse of the French in April on the one side, and, on the other, the hoped-for time when American help would be effective. In the year 1918 it turned out that this success definitely contributed to the result that the War ended in favour of the Allies, but when the Flanders battle broke off they had no inducement to look upon it as decisive." [1]

Again: "There can be no doubt to-day . . . that, in point of fact, English stubbornness bridged over the crisis in France. . . . The help which England brought to the cause of the Entente was compensated by the result." [2]

Britain had played her part for the good of the cause. Neither had she hesitated to pay the cost; indeed, she is still paying it now.

[1] *The Times*, September 2nd, 1914.

[1] *Schlachten des Weltkrieges*, xxvii (Flandern, 1917), p. 141.

[2] Kuhl, *Der Weltkrieg*, 1914–1918, ii, p. 126.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WOUNDED CANADIANS

A party of wounded men of the 2nd Canadian Division finds shelter behind the ruins of a German strong-point near Passchendaele village, October 6th, 1917. The strong-point is built of concrete, and was originally neither more nor less than a large-sized pill-box. Allusion has more than once been made to the number of these concrete works still wholly or in part extant, and it may be mentioned that by far the largest surviving group is to be found distributed between the Menin Road and Langemarck—grim memorials to "Third Ypres."

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CHAPTER LXIX

MEMORIES XIV.—THE MINOR MISERIES OF WAR

It was, perhaps, inevitable that men passing into the Army after a more-or-less settled life in some civilian occupation should have experienced a sense of irritation over a number of the minor rules and regulations necessary when a vast body of men are brought together and trained. Fortunately, the British character is of such a nature that there are few things in life, irritating or otherwise, from which the average Briton cannot extract at least a grain or two of humour. In this chapter an ex-Serviceman who joined up "for the duration" recalls a few of those experiences which appealed to him least. Looking back, he finds that, after all, even the minor miseries of war had their humorous side.

Mud, lice, and rats compete for pride of place in my memory of the minor miseries of war, but it will be fairest to begin with the woes of a recruit.

Vision in a Window

The first sight of myself as a soldier was a shock to me. My form and features were reflected in a grocer's window as an uneasy wraith hovering over a pyramid of tinned fruit. The hat was too big; it bent my ears into a shape which I did not admire, and I had to tilt my chin to bring anything else but the peak into my field of vision. An arrangement of creases in the tunic gave me an oddly distorted bust, and my shoulders looked as though they belonged to somebody else.

The reflection stopped short of the concertina'd trousers, the unevenly laminated puttees, and the stark yellow boots, which had never known blacking. Nor did it reveal the irritating vest or extraordinary underpants—a flannel garment with tapes at the ankles, the like of which I never saw before or since.

Sartorially considered, this uniform seemed an inequitable exchange for my civilian clothes, the surrender of which had entailed a tip to a corporal to cover the expense of sending them home, where they never arrived. Appearance apart, the uniform was not comfortable. The collar of the tunic chafed my neck, the boots burned my feet, and the trousers could not be ignored. There was so much of them; they sagged at the seat, billowed round the waist, and could not be induced to accept the restraint of puttees.

As for the puttees, these having been thrown at me so that they fell in festoons round my neck, I took a dislike to them from the first. Endless, they seemed. It was weeks before I mastered them, and to the last they were prone to fits of rebellion; they could never be trusted to finish their spiralling in the same place, or to retain a proper grip upon the tapes.

If puttees were a puzzle, boots were a misery which I should not have classified as minor. There never were such boots as the pair issued to me! Theoretically my size, they were far from my shape. Leather they may have been, but they were as unpliable as armour-plate, and they hated me. When I glowered at them there was a crease across the toe-cap which responded with a jeering smile.

Scintillating Wit

On the exercise-ground the sergeant would not recognise uncomfortable boots as an impediment to alacrity in forming fours. "You broke your mother's heart," he earnestly informed me, "but you won't break mine." (Ah, the brilliance of those unuttered retorts to rude sergeants!)

The recruit's initial outfit was a queer collection of articles—some serviceable, some not. Most regiments had a legend of a man who tried to shave with an Army razor. Few jack-knives were efficient; the tin-opening gadget attached to them was responsible for many casualties, though it was good for scraping out the bowl of a pipe. I still use mine for that purpose.

Useful or not, all articles had to be exposed at kit inspection (Caledonian Market, we called it), and I was usually short of something conspicuous. Blessed with a trustful nature, I had not learnt the moral of the song—

> I've lost my rifle and bayonet
> I've lost my four-by-two,
> I've lost my hold-all,
> And now I've got damn all,
> Since I met you.

Missing articles were not treated by me as personal losses until I found I had to bear the cost of their replacement out of my pay—or out of what was left of it after mysterious deductions for barrack-room damages. No doubt there were adequate reasons for such deductions, but explanations were not readily forthcoming. Knowledge of military accounting, like knowledge of military law, was not imparted to the recruit; he was assumed to possess it.

I took a long time to acquire any pride in the goods which the Army had loaned me. I should have been far happier without my equipment. Undoing all those buckles to free the belt *de rigueur* for walking-out dress was a nuisance, and re-assembling the jumble of harness a ticklish business at which I never became expert. There were two straps at the back which had to go left over right—or right over left. I could never remember which, though steps were taken to impress the correct order upon my mind.

Over such trifles as these I found myself in conflict with the authorities, some of whom, for that reason, I remember with a fine distaste. In my more charitable moods I credit them with intelligence; I tell myself that their object was to instil the fighting spirit into quiet, law-abiding youths. And who shall say they were not successful? At any rate, they made us long to go overseas.

"*Hommes 40*" Fare Ill

I have had worse Channel crossings than my first from Southampton as a soldier, but never a worse train journey than the one from the coast to our unit. We were unskilled in the art of sleeping in a "*Chevaux* 10, *Hommes* 40" waggon. Given perfect understanding among the troops, a recognition of the right of each to an equal share of floor space, and a settled plan for the stowing of packs and rifles, it is possible to sleep

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CAVE-MEN

At first glance this picture appears to be an illustration from *Gulliver's Travels*, interpolated among our pages by mistake. However, the photograph is quite in order, for it shows gunners of the 51st Division entering their billet in an overthrown water-tower, of generous dimensions, at Riencourt-les-Bapaume, January, 1918. Ah, if only it had been a beer-barrel of the same size!

in such waggons. For inexperienced travellers like us, sleep was out of the question.

We had not even a candle to relieve the chaos of the darkness. It was a night of misery. When dawn came, we crowded to look out of the grating in the door. I had a map, and thought that if I could get the name of a station I might deduce what part of the line we were bound for. (I was very innocent.) The first station-name announced to me was not helpful. It was "HOMMES-DAMES."

In France a soldier often did not know where he was, and seldom knew where he was going. All he knew was that he was "far from home." (It is not without significance that those words complete a popular alliterative saying.) This ignorance bred rumours, and, as every soldier knows, it was mostly the bad rumours which proved to be true. "We're going out for a long rest," "We're being sent to Ireland," "We're going to Egypt—the Quarter's had an issue of pith helmets"—none of these rumours came off.

Runners had the greatest sense of rumour; most of the stories, imparted with an air of omniscience, were put into circulation by them. Which of the two—a runner's rumour or a "lat" rumour—was the more incredible, I cannot now remember; but, whatever the source, rumours were disquieting. If they were good, they were usually too good to be true; if they were bad, they depressed us long before they turned into facts.

Rumours and More Rumours

There were comic rumours, of course—some peculiar to one's own battalion, some a part of the folklore of the B.E.F. An example of the first kind was—"The Colonel's been wounded." Details followed, of which the most kindly was—"In a fleshy part of the leg." The concealed point of this remark was that the colonel's legs were usually like match-sticks with the wood scraped off. Of the second kind were rumours descriptive of cushy parts of the line. There were said to be places where you could slip over to Jerry's canteen and be treated to German beer.

I can remember only one good rumour which proved not to be unfounded. It reached us in the front line while we were dealing with a counter-attack. "To-morrow," it ran, "we're going out for a rest. Buses will take us to Amiens." It was so preposterous that I laughed—for the first time for three days. But, sure enough, those of us who survived the following day were relieved, and there were the buses waiting.

All night we had been trudging through Somme mud; we were more dead than alive, certainly more asleep than awake, and we did not believe our own eyes when we saw the buses. It was not until we had boarded them, and their French drivers had set off at a terrifying speed, that we accepted them as realities, and not as unsubstantial products of disordered minds. That ride shattered what remained of our nerves.

"Going out for a rest"—I have often wondered who coined the phrase. Someone, evidently, with a nice sense of irony. For "rest," as the soldier conceived it, was a thing he never got. When what he craved would have been most beneficial to him—a respite from being "messed about"—he was brought sharply to heel.

No lying in bed for him, no sweet idleness. Not a minute must be lost before the all-important spit-and-polish business began again. This disregard of the soldier's convenience was galling, and the fact is not a bit altered by the assurance that all was done for the best in this best of all possible wars. (Things will be different if they put me in charge of the next one!)

Those Terrible Sermons

"Resting" usually included not only intensive training for an advance, but a series of posh inspections. Sometimes the ceremony of retreat was revived, and, if we were very unlucky, open-air church parades.

It is difficult for me to believe that I was exceptional in regarding church parade as a bore. The finicky preparations ("Tallest on the right, shortest on the left . . .") took the edge off one's pleasure in the only lively part of the proceedings—the bellowing of some familiar hymn. The padre's sermon was usually inaudible; his words were borne away on the wind, and such fragments as reached us seldom made us mourn their loss.

As in other respects chaplains were such admirable fellows, it is hard to understand why their sermons should sometimes have been so fantastically

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irrelevant, so remote from reality, so incongruous, that listening to them was a strain which the troops thought it unfair for them to be called upon to endure.

I remember one chaplain who strove to point some trite moral by inviting us to emulate a company runner. " He does not loiter on the way for idle gossip. Turning not to the right hand nor to the left, he goes straight at top-most speed, bearing a message which no man shall make him divulge. His sense of duty is an inspiration to him—" and so on. When the troops near me tittered, the preacher looked amazed. He didn't know I was a runner, and a typical one.

Another earnest gentleman treated us to a doleful sermon in which the refrain " After death, what ? " recurred with such monotonous regularity that a man in the rear rank was driven to dispel the gloom by exclaiming, when next the question was asked, " All right, I'll buy it ! "

I ought to add that if the Army's care of our souls lacked the thoroughness of its care for our bodies, we did not make that a matter for complaint. Spiritual food we could, at a pinch, do without. Rations of a more material nature were needed regularly.

We seldom went hungry, but there were long spells when the diet was wanting in variety ; bully and biscuits too often figured in the menu.

Questions Concerning Bully

The mention of bully awakens in my mind a host of unanswered questions. Did anyone ever succeed in opening a tin with the key provided ? Did anyone ever acquire a liking for the stuff, either neat, with jam, in stew, or disguised as a rissole ? Some brands were not so tasteless as others, but did anyone ever look forward to a meal of it ? Are there men who became bully-addicts, and, twenty years after, remain slaves to the habit ?

Biscuits shared the unpopularity of bully, though there is this to be said for biscuits—some kinds made good fuel in a brazier. Cooks essayed experiments with them. I recall with loathing a mess of biscuits stewed with jam. We kicked it about till we lost it.

I did not envy the cooks their job. If they were, as a rule, unenterprising, it was no doubt because stew and tea were the only things which they could be reasonably sure would not be cold before reaching the troops. The roasts which they sometimes attempted were a sad mockery. I remember a Christmas when we had been looking forward to roast beef for dinner.

We were billeted in a barn, and the field cookers were two or three hundred yards away. Our mess orderlies did their best, but the lump of beef which I received to share among my section was already cold, and I had no means of carving it. I laid it on a mail sack on the floor, and hacked it into portions which looked like cat's meat, and were not, I imagine, any more palatable.

Queer things sometimes turned up in the rations. Tinned herrings and oranges were regarded with suspicion. They were usually heralds of an offensive. Once chestnuts were issued in lieu of potatoes. If they had been left in their skins, or had been completely flayed, they might have been eatable. As it was, chestnuts were voted *no bon* : the reward for picking out the pieces of skin was not worth the trouble.

Cooking in the Trenches

Army tea had a peculiar flavour, due, presumably, to chlorinated water ; but why rice usually tasted of paraffin was not so easily explained. Nor could the invariable shape of the loaves be accounted for, except by the theory that it was to ensure that one always got a damaged end for one's share.

Cooking individual meals in the trenches was not easy. Facilities were limited, rations not plentiful, fuel was scarce, and shelter hard to find. What we were never short of was mud or dust. Even the stoutest-hearted soldier has been brought to the verge of tears by some mishap which overthrew his Primus, put out his fire, or upset his carefully-prepared repast. The mishap might be in the form of a shell, a sudden collapse of the trench wall, a shower of soil from a disintegrating sandbag, or a visit from an interfering sergeant who thought the periscope of more importance than the Primus.

Even in billets, cooking for oneself had its disappointments. I remember trying to make a pudding from a packet of powder which had been sent from home, and which I had been carrying about for weeks in my gas-helmet

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

CLEANING HIS KILT

A braw laddie frae north o' the border caught outside his dug-out at Bazentin-le-Petit, engaged in the not-too-easy task of trying to clean his mud-spattered kilt. Immediate thought in the mind of the mere Englishman : Now we know what he wears underneath. The photograph was taken in the month of November, 1916, so it is to be hoped that vanity did not keep this doughty warrior unshielded from the elements too long.

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satchel. According to the directions, the powder was to be stirred into hot milk and brought to the boil.

Three of us put our last sous together and trapesed through the mud to buy a half-litre of milk. I started the Primus, and we sat around watching it. There was no other light in our corner of the granary. When the milk was judged to be at the right temperature to receive the pudding-powder, I opened the packet. It contained a tablet of soap!

Billets contributed generously to the minor miseries of war. An outhouse with beds of dried beanstalks that crackled like burning sticks all night; a stable with a stone floor in the severe winter of 1916; a ruined estaminet with a roof that let in the snow; a granary with a floor like a petrified stormy sea; a cottage infested with mice and beetles; elephant huts in a lake of mud; a barn with hay trodden to dust, which set us all sneezing; a factory to which an enemy aeroplane paid a visit while we were in residence . . . these are some of the billets I recall.

Disadvantages of Tents

The worst billet, however, was preferable to an overcrowded tent. The presence of tents usually implied the absence of any other buildings. Almost invariably they were pitched in a region which the civilians had evacuated, and consequently, if it were winter-time or wet (and it always seemed to be one or the other in France), there was no diversion for the troops.

Long friendships were strained to breaking-point in overcrowded tents. It is difficult to be patient when your face is trodden on or when the pile of rifles round the tent pole crashes suddenly upon your ankles. It is impossible to rise in a good temper when you have not slept a wink because of the too-close proximity of restless men and the fug of their exhalations.

Insufficient sleep was certainly a drawback to life in France during the War. The strain of keeping awake during a spell on the fire-step was so exacting that one was almost grateful for the lice whose attentions kept one occupied. At other times they were not so welcome. They did not get really busy until one was snug and warm and ready for authorised sleep.

One got used to them, as to most things, but I shall not forget my horror when I first discovered I was lousy. That others were in a like condition

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SMASHED UP

All that was left of the church of Douchy-les-Ayette by June 30th, 1917. In spite of the destruction here evident, however, this small village, which lies in a line with Albert and Arras, and is about 12 km. south-south-west of the latter, was never wholly evacuated by its inhabitants. From October, 1914, to March, 1917, it was in enemy occupation. Relinquished on the German retirement to the Hindenburg Line, it was never retaken, although between March 29th and 31st, 1918, the advancing foe got to within a few score yards of it. Indeed, for several days the Germans held Ayette itself, which is little more than 1 km. to the east.

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comforted me to some extent, just as it was reassuring to me to find that I was not alone in feeling windy under prolonged bombardment. But I never really overcame my repugnance to lice, any more than I overcame my objection to shells which burst too near me.

Rats were a nuisance, too. They snuffled as though they had a perpetual cold in the head; they had no sense of the fitness of things; they stole your rations, and ran over your face while you slept; they eluded the most carefully-aimed missile, and there were millions of them. The ration must have been at least six to every soldier in France on both sides of the line.

The Rat Laughed Last

I once nearly scored off a rat. Not by the cheese-on-bayonet method—that meant firing one's rifle, which in turn meant cleaning the barrel. My ruse did not involve any tragedy. I was inhabiting a wood-lined funk-hole in a sunken road—somewhere near Bullecourt, I think—where rats were especially active. One of them gnawed through my haversack and devoured a candle; another (or it may have been the same) consumed my bread ration. How he managed to get the lid off my mess-tin, in which I had wisely deposited the bread, I cannot imagine, but I had to believe that a rat was the culprit; I could not suspect a human being. As soon as I had time, I stopped up all the visible holes.

That night I heard a rat busy in the woodwork. I lit a candle, and, locating the exact spot where he was at work, checked his progress with the lid of a cigarette tin. Presently I had the satisfaction of hearing him attack the metal. It kinked agreeably, and I pictured him baffled on the other side. When, discouraged, he departed, I blew out the candle and fell asleep. The candle was gone in the morning.

If to lice and rats are added slugs and ants, and if human beings are omitted, there remains, I think, no other form of animal life which bothered the soldier much. The human beings on our side of No Man's Land, civil and military, commissioned and non-commissioned, were not all of them likeable. The natives might be forgiven if their admiration for the British Army showed signs of wear and tear; and while they made us pay for everything—even in some parts for a drink of water—we could not forget that there were profiteers as heartless in England, where personal privations and physical risks were not included in the process of money-making.

To dwell on the less amiable among one's military acquaintance would be to lay oneself open to the charge of nursing a grievance. I forgive all those who interfered with my pleasure or made bad moments worse—all except the sergeant who ordered me to ex-

Photo: G. T. Watson.

OLD AND NEW

Of more interest, perhaps, than the very fine new church of Douchy-les-Ayette, are the cottages in the foreground, which bear a suspicious resemblance to a British Army hut. There is one British cemetery attached to Douchy, begun by the 3rd Division in August, 1918. It records 726 United Kingdom, 5 Australian, 2 South African, 1 Canadian, and 1 German burials.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

AN INTERESTING RELIC

During the German occupation of Douchy, a cemetery was built from the stones of a wrecked farm, and a number of commemorative pillars were set up. In the fighting of early 1917, however, the cemetery was destroyed by gun fire, and this memorial alone remained standing. Thus it stands yet, with its fallen cap lying just where it fell twenty years ago. The date on the stone is 1914.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WHAT IS HE DOING?

We refer, of course, to the soldier in the far corner. No prize is offered for guessing the answer, since few indeed are the old soldiers who did not at some time during the Four Years embark on similar hunting-expeditions in their more intimate garments. The picture comes from Querrieu, is dated May, 1918, and shows Australian troops.

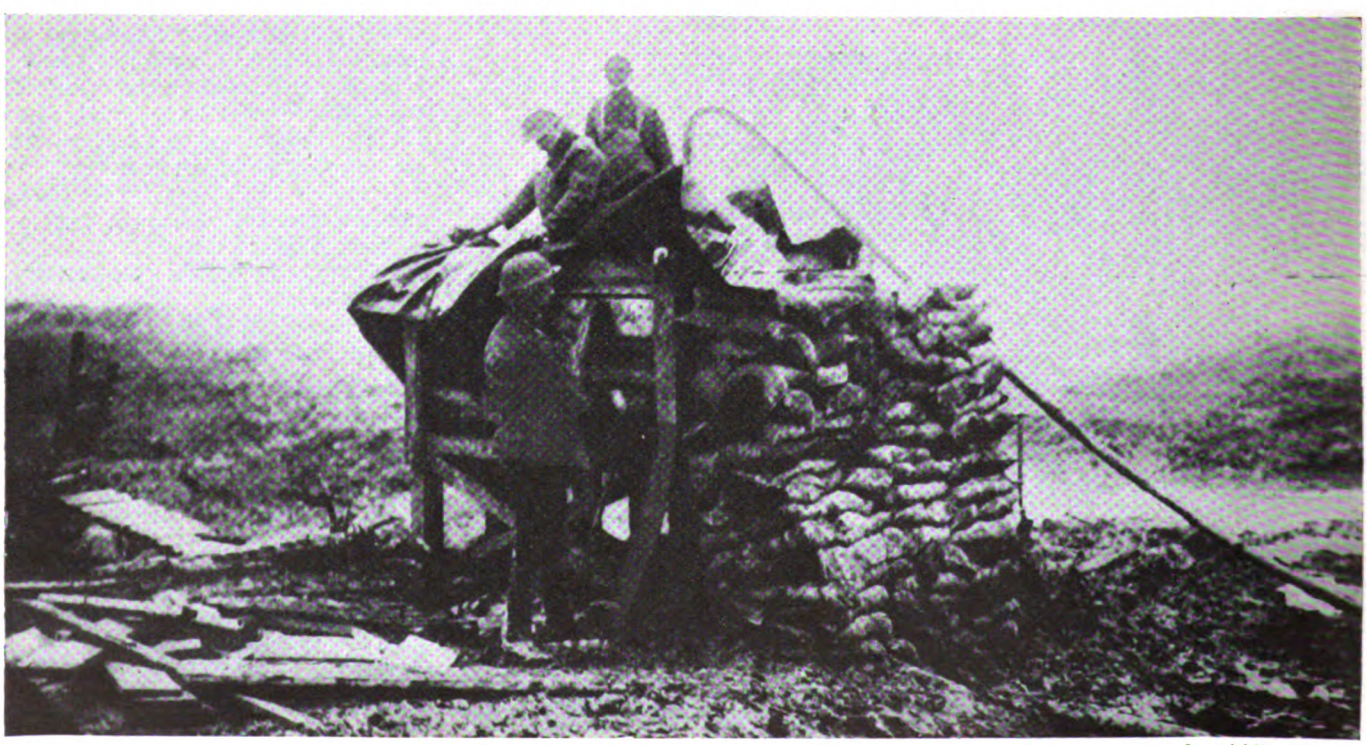

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FIXING UP A WATER-POINT

Among the "minor miseries" of the War will always be remembered the unenviable job of fetching water, often amid circumstances suggesting that the more malign Fates had suddenly resolved to make one their sole and exclusive plaything. Here a party of 4th Canadian Division troops is fixing up a drinking-water supply on Passchendaele Ridge, November, 1917.

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tinguish a brazier which I had spent hours in coaxing into life.

A Ruthless Sergeant

With commendable patience I had chopped wet wood into fine strips, I had exhausted my lungs in puffing them into flame, I had swung the brazier until my arm ached, and then, just as the coke began to sizzle, along came the sergeant to complain that the smoke would be seen by the enemy. I hope Jerry knows that we credited him with eternal vigilance and supernatural eyesight.

Life in the trenches was made up of miscellaneous hardships which are not susceptible of division into minor and major. Our lack of warmth, for example, is too painful to recall; but it is not so unpleasant to think about our toilet preparations. Often enough we had no facilities—water was too precious to be wasted. At such times some of us managed to shave with a drop of tea left in our mess-tins. Where water was available (from puddle or flood) we washed all visible areas, but it was a hasty business.

It was easy to become indifferent about washing. Out of the line, indifference was the only excuse for a whole platoon using one bucket of water which an energetic or intimidated person had fetched from a well not 100 yards away. You dipped your shaving brush into the troubled water, and, having shaved, painted the rest of your face with what remained of the lather, and wiped it off. You were then ready for parade.

Our infrequent baths were invariably disappointments. The hot water to which we had looked forward was not hot, and there was never enough of it. Shower-baths were the worst. You shivered under a miserable dribble of water which did not deserve the compliment of "luke-warm," and as you tried to soap yourself you were hustled away to make room for the next party.

Clean, but not Untenanted

It was at the baths that a change of underclothing was issued. Since I may be thought capable of exaggerating my misfortunes, I will simply ask if anyone remembers receiving baby socks and giant pants, and if he ever had cause to suspect that a clean vest could harbour lice?

These are not the memoirs of an inveterate grouser. The minor miseries of war had their place in the scheme of things: they threw into sharp relief the minor pleasures, with memories of which my mind is as well stocked as any man's.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

The Tommy in the middle, evidently a sound philosopher, makes sure that the uncertainty of life in the trenches shall not deprive him of at any rate this day's dinner. How many others, even so comparatively early in the War as October, 1916—the date of our photograph—could still eat Army rations with such zest? The picture comes from a rural spot somewhere in the valley of the Ancre.

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CHAPTER LXX

THE FALL OF THE HOLY CITY

Prior to the autumn of 1917 the British effort in Palestine had consisted of two pitched battles before historic Gaza, from both of which the Turkish defenders had emerged victorious. But the good fortune that had hitherto attended the Turks was destined presently to desert them. The third battle before Gaza, coupled with the operations at Beersheba, resulted in the withdrawal of the shattered Turkish divisions. There followed a series of brilliantly fought actions as the XXI Corps, and thereafter the XX Corps, pursued the enemy into the Judæan hills and thence to the gates of Jerusalem and beyond.

In June, 1917, General Murray was recalled. He had indeed failed at Gaza, but he had some fine performances to his credit. Working always with inadequate forces, he had cleared the Western Desert, had brought quiet and contentment to Egypt in the face of fierce propaganda, had driven the Turks from Sinai, and, by his splendid organisation of the rear services, especially in the building of railway and pipeline, had, as his successor generously acknowledged, laid a solid foundation on which might be built the temple of victory.

Allenby Assumes Command

In warfare, as was shown at Magdhaba and Rafah, quite minor factors may determine whether the outcome be success or failure. Had Murray won the First Gaza, as he so nearly did, he might have received strong reinforcements from the Government, and have then continued his career of victory till he had driven the Turk from Palestine.

Sir Edmund Allenby assumed command on the 28th June. He had won fame by his skilful handling of the Cavalry Division in the Retreat from Mons. Since that affair his reputation had waned. His somewhat gruff manner, which earned for him the sobriquet of "The Bull," must have won him enemies; for there were constant reports that he was to be sent home from France. He was, however, to confound his detractors, and to prove himself unquestionably one of the ablest leaders in the British Army, if not on the Allied side.

In Palestine he found deadlock. During May and June the British and Turks had faced each other in strongly entrenched positions. They were at close quarters from the sea to Sheikh Abbas; and, thence eastwards, they were separated by a No Man's Land which widened gradually to a distance of 17 miles at Beersheba.

Chetwode succeeded Dobell. During the summer he prepared an appreciation of the situation which has been rightly described as "a classic of constructive thinking and clear exposition." With this in his hand, Allenby made an immediate and thorough reconnaissance of the whole of the front. From what he saw he became convinced of the soundness of Chetwode's views. He accordingly adopted them *en bloc*, and carried them into effect in the battle which he fought some 5 months later.

One of his first acts was to move his headquarters from Cairo to the desert at Khan Yunis. There he was able to establish close personal touch with his troops, and soon became known and admired by them all. He was determined to exercise direct personal control over the operations, and therefore abolished the Eastern Force.

Reorganisation of Our Forces

Having, in accordance with Chetwode's advice, demanded that his army be increased to a total of 7 divisions and 3 cavalry divisions, he reorganised it into 3 Corps—the XX (Chetwode), containing the 10th (Irish), 53rd, 60th (London), and 74th Divisions, with 4 brigades of Heavy Artillery; the XXI (Bulfin) containing the 52nd, 54th, and 75th (Territorial and Indian) Divisions, with 3 brigades of Heavy Artillery; and the Desert Mounted Corps (Chauvel), containing the Anzac, Australian, and Yeomanry Mounted Divisions, and the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade.

In addition to these formations he had at his disposal the 7th Mounted Brigade and a "composite force" consisting of Imperial Service Indian troops, a battalion of the West India Regiment, and French and Italian contingents.

During the summer the Turks had been reinforced, had greatly strengthened their position, and had extended it along a front of 30 miles to Kauwukat. Between this point and Beersheba, which was also fortified, there was a gap of 4½ miles.

The British were now much stronger both in men and in guns than hitherto; and they might no doubt, though at the cost of very heavy casualties, have by direct attack driven out the Turks, but only to better positions in their rear. The obvious need was for a stroke at the enemy line of communications, forming part of a tremendous blow which, if successful, would free the way for a rapid advance on Jerusalem. The Turkish left flank was open, and Allenby possessed one of the finest cavalry corps the world has known. There lay the key.

Two obstacles had, however, to be surmounted: the absence of water, and the weak attacking-power of cavalry against modern fire. Large water-columns accompanying the mounted troops would disclose the movement in time for the Turks to reinforce their left flank so heavily that our troopers would hurl themselves in vain against it. Only if the operation could be veiled from the enemy until the last moment, and then carried through within 24 hours of encounter, could there be any hope of success. If the water problem could be solved in secrecy, the battle was won.

Allenby's Plans

Allenby's plan, therefore, as suggested by Chetwode, was to organise water-supply on a vast scale and with the utmost secrecy, to seek new sources, to enlarge existing ones, and to supplement both by pipe-lines and camel-transport. Only thus would it be possible to transfer large forces eastward. That essential preliminary completed, Chauvel would attack Beersheba from the east, and Chetwode, after having assisted in the attack from the south-west, would move into the gap west of Beersheba to strike thence to the north-west.

In the meantime, Bulfin would be hammering away to his front, and doing everything possible to inspire the belief that Gaza was the true objective. An essential feature was air-ascendancy, without which our preparations were certain to be discovered; and this was ensured by the arrival of three squadrons of the latest machines.

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Chetwode had striven hard and successfully to raise morale and efficiency after the two costly defeats at Gaza. Allenby, with his dominating character and his bold and confident bearing, confirmed the troops in the expectation of victory and the determination to win it at all costs.

From Qantara, now the main base, right up to the front line, preparations were in full swing. Everyone, whether of the A.S.C. or A.O.C., supplying and transporting the necessary stores, or of the infantry raiding from the front-line trenches, or of the cavalry operating thirstily under a fierce sun perhaps for 36 hours at a stretch in front of Beersheba, was "all out" to win. Special praise must be given to the R.E. and the Australian Engineers for unremitting labour in the exploitation of water supplies.

On the eve of battle we may turn for a moment to the general situation in the Middle East. To the Central Powers the loss of Baghdad came as a severe blow both to plans and to prestige. They were determined to recapture it. To this end, Turkish divisions were withdrawn from European fronts and formed into a *7th Army*, which, with the *6th Army* already in Mesopotamia, was to constitute the *Yilderim* (Thunderbolt) Army under von Falkenhayn.

The *German Asia Corps*

Away in a little village in Silesia, a curious brigade of all arms, called the *German Asia Corps*, was being specially trained and equipped to take part in this movement 2,500 miles away. It all seemed quite feasible while a beaten British army lay on the Sinai border. But the scheme became definitely dangerous when that army was strongly reinforced, and was clearly intending to strike a blow which might reach *Yilderim's* communications. Von Falkenhayn saw this, and was most anxious to use the *7th Army* to attack and drive away Allenby before attempting to carry out his original task. He succeeded, indeed, in getting it diverted to Palestine; but—owing to strong Turkish opposition—too late for employment to any great extent in the Third Battle of Gaza.

Our pretended preparations for the assembly of an army in Cyprus and for its descent upon Alexandretta have been described in an earlier part. Though carried out on a large scale and with great thoroughness, they proved a complete failure. On the other hand, a much simpler ruse had a wonderful success.

A staff officer accompanying a patrol ran into enemy cavalry. The patrol galloped away. The staff officer rolled in his saddle as if wounded, and dropped a case, covered with blood, containing papers among which were false notes of a plan of attack, directing the main force against Gaza and a feinting force against Beersheba. These papers completely deceived the Turks and Germans, and strengthened their impression that Gaza would be our chief objective—an impression confirmed by obvious preparations for a landing to the north of that town, and by the growing number of allied warships off the coast.

Allenby wished to accustom the Turks to movements of his cavalry toward Beersheba. Feints were therefore continually carried out in that direction. These operations, often executed on a considerable scale, were an encouragement to the setting of traps, in which both sides became adepts. Major Bird, for instance, commanding a squadron of Light Horse, having sighted two troops of hostile cavalry, baited them with one of his troops, while the other two worked round both flanks under cover.

Warfare by Strange Methods

Then, just as the Turks were forming for the charge, this concealed pair swooped down on them and put them to flight. The Australians pursued, and, with the superior speed and condition of their walers, soon caught up the enemy. Having no swords, however, each man seized a Turk by the collar and, still at the gallop, lifted him out of the saddle to the ground. After depositing the lot in this fashion, they returned, collected them, and sent them off as prisoners.

Just before the battle, Allenby had a

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TURKISH TRENCH

A photograph illustrating the Third Battle of Gaza, and taken on November 2nd, 1917. It shows one of a number of trenches captured from the enemy by the 4th Royal Scots, supported by two companies of the 8th Cameronians, 52nd Division, in the attack on El Arish Redoubt. Notice the prickly-pear hedge, as useful as any barbed-wire entanglement, on the right.

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great stroke of luck. A German airman succeeded in breaking through our defensive air-patrols, and in mapping the fresh distribution of our forces. Had he returned safely, all our plans would have been completely exposed, and the Turk would have had time to take the necessary counter-measures. Fortunately, however, he was brought down just before he reached his own lines. On such slender threads may hang the fate of battles, and even of nations.

Allenby must have passed some anxious days: preparations afoot on a stupendous scale; not a patch of cover in which to conceal them; certainty of failure if surprise were not effected; after which *Yilderim* might come into play.

He had to organise, not only for victory, but also for pursuit. Yet all supply arrangements east of the great wadi had to be deferred to the last moment, and then rushed into full development. He could not be ready earlier; and the rains, during which armies in this region can hardly move, were nearly due.

Nevertheless, he pursued his preparations secretly, confidently, and successfully. His officers and men nobly seconded him, although, throughout the high heat of summer, they had been suffering greatly from the *khamsin* and from a plague of septic sores. All night there was a ceaseless buzz of work; yet the day was quiet.

There was, indeed, a bright side to the picture. The British were superior in numbers—in horse, foot, guns, and aircraft. Allenby was clear of purpose, and had the Government solidly behind him. The Turks, on the other hand, were quarrelling with their German masters. Our troops were well-fed and well-doctored, and drank freely of water piped for 140 miles into their trenches; whereas the Turks suffered so severely from a lack of these amenities that they deserve eternal credit for presenting as bold a front as they did.

The Turks Attack

On the 20th October, the troops began to move. Leaving camps standing and fires burning, they marched at night, huddling in the watercourses by day for concealment. On the 27th, the Turks launched a determined attack near El Baqqar against the Middlesex Yeomanry, who were covering the flank-march eastward.

The brunt of the fighting fell on two small parties. One troop, under Captain McDougall, made a magnificent defence from early dawn to late afternoon, when it was rescued by part of the 53rd Division. Two troops under Major Lafone fought for 7 hours, and

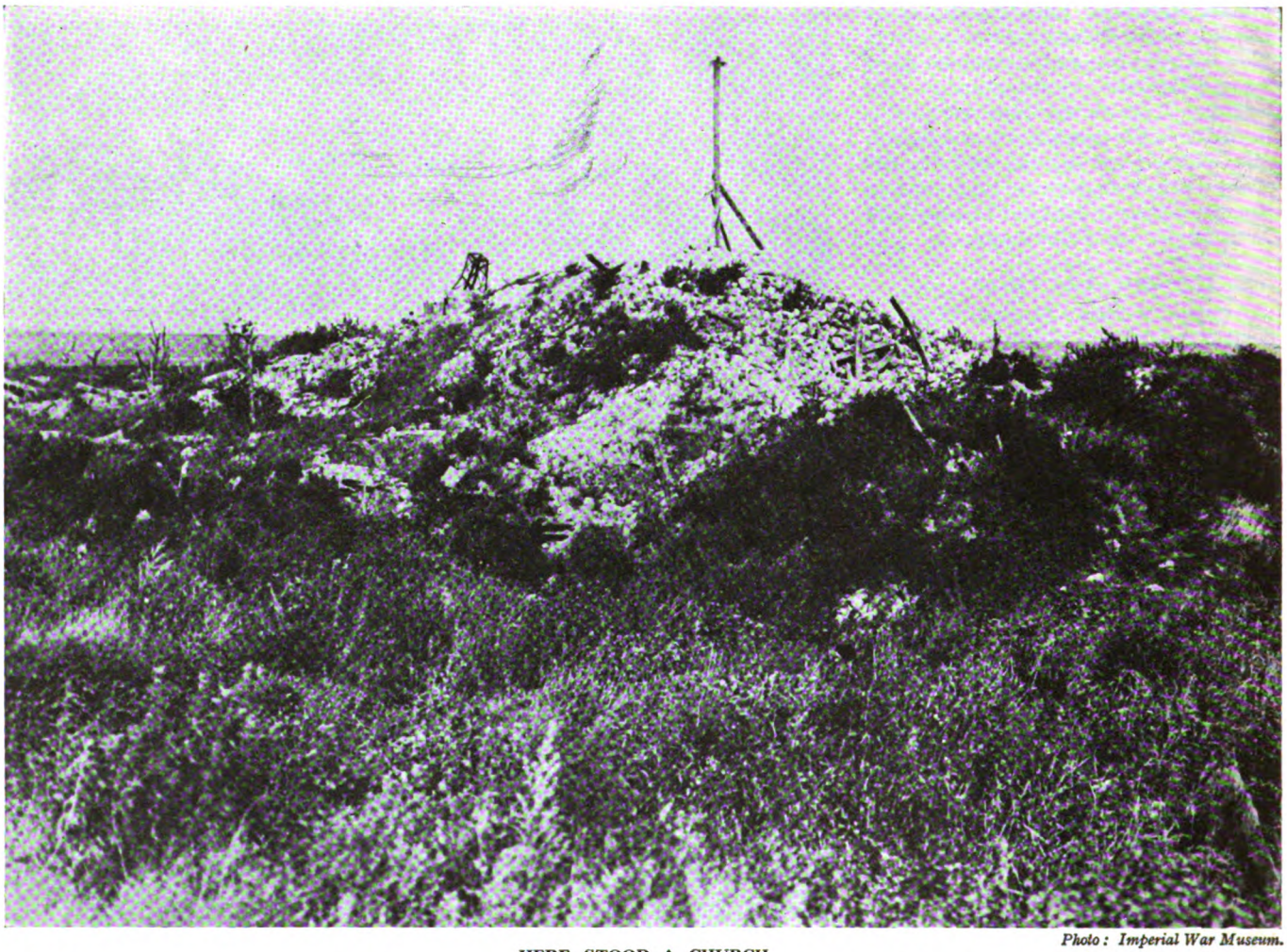

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HERE STOOD A CHURCH

This photograph was taken on August 26th, 1917, but the encroaching vegetation shows the building to have been destroyed a considerable while previously. The church is that of Neuville-St. Vaast, which lies about 7 km. due north of Arras and 4 km. south-west of Vimy. The village is thus within the area of the Canadians' great exploits, a circumstance which is reflected in the two cemeteries attached to it. One of these, containing 111 Canadian graves, is laid out in the north-west corner of the Vimy Memorial Park. The other, at the northern edge of the park, contains 531 Canadian and 215 United Kingdom dead.

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were then overwhelmed by the enemy. Lafone's last message was " I shall hold on to the last." There were only three survivors. When the garrison was reduced to five, Lafone sprang out to face the last charge, and was ridden down. He received the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross. The work of these two gallant detachments was of great value in preventing the Turks from seizing ground from which they could have seen and interfered with our movements.

The march of approach was completed on the 30th October. Early on the 31st, the XX Corps attacked Beersheba from the south-west. The 60th and 74th Divisions did most of the work, two Welch Fusilier battalions behaving with particular gallantry. The last of the enemy's trenches on that flank were carried before dusk, and the town could also have been captured had not that objective, for the sake of its water, been allotted to the Desert Mounted Corps.

The latter corps executed a skilful and successful march to the east of Beersheba, and then attacked the town in a westerly direction. The Turks, however, offered a stout resistance on the Tel es Sabe till 3 p.m., and Chauvel recognised that he must take some drastic action if he were to capture his objective before nightfall. He therefore ordered Grant's 4th L.H. Brigade to make a direct attack on the town.

An Inspiring Spectacle

Grant decided to charge mounted, using the 4th and 12th A.L.H. in advance, with the 11th in support. The gallant squadrons, bayonets in hand, swept down the gentle slope toward Beersheba. Machine guns began to take toll of them, but the Notts battery, galloping up in support, quickly found the range and stopped them. Seen from the guns the spectacle was most inspiring.

" It was growing dark, and the enemy trenches were outlined in fire by the flashes of their rifles. Beyond, and a little above them, blazed the bigger, deeper flashes of their field guns, and our own shell burst like a row of red stars above the Turkish positions. In front the long lines of cavalry swept forward at racing speed half obscured in clouds of reddened dust. . . . Over the Turks they went, leaping the two lines of deep trenches, and, dismounting on the far side, flung themselves into the trenches with the bayonet." [1]

Fortunately, as no attack was expected from the east, most of the trenches faced south, and none was wired. Some of the squadrons galloped on without a halt, and seized the coveted wells on which further movement depended. The Turks had prepared them all for demolition, but the suddenness of the final stroke saved the greater part from destruction. The sappers had a busy time removing mines and booby-traps, one of the former being found in the house which Chetwode had chosen as his headquarters.

Grant's Brigade, by its charge, not only captured Beersheba and 1,000 of the 2,000 prisoners gathered there: it had, also, a permanent moral effect on the enemy. The Turkish infantry had previously believed that they had nothing to fear from mounted action. At Beersheba that belief was rudely shaken; and it was to receive many additional shocks as British cavalry leaders realised that here was a country and here were conditions suitable at last for the employment of the *arme blanche*.

Chetwode had now to change his front from a north-east to a north-west face. During his movement, Bulfin delivered a serious attack on the outlying works

[1] *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 393.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

CHURCH AND MAIRIE

The new church of Neuville-St. Vaast is entirely hemmed in with buildings, and therefore difficult to photograph. On the left of the picture is a corner of the Vimy road, trodden by many a tourist. Despite the proximity of the village to Vimy, its War history is confined mainly to 1915 and early 1916. During the Battle of Artois, which began on May 9th of the former year, the French took half Neuville-St. Vaast on that date, its cemetery the day following, and the remainder of the village on the 8th June—nearly a month later. In January, 1916, two German attacks in this sector were repulsed.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MAIN STREET, GAZA

The wrecked condition of the town after it had eventually been captured on November 7th, 1917, is well shown here. As their retirement became quicker, the Turks tended to leave behind them the civilians of the various towns and villages evacuated; but from Gaza and Beersheba they removed the great majority of civil inhabitants, pressing into military service as many able-bodied men as possible.

of Gaza, with the object of fixing Turkish attention and reserves on their right flank. At 11 p.m. on November 11th, the Scottish Rifles of Leggett's brigade captured Umbrella Hill without great difficulty.

Turks and Tanks

The 54th Division, attacking on a wide front nearer the sea, was also successful, and, assisted by a naval bombardment and by the gallant exertions of a few year-old tanks,[1] gained most of its objectives, but suffered heavy casualties in the process. The object of the operation was only partially achieved, for, as will be seen later, the Turks despatched most of their reserves to their left flank.

To protect the change of front of the XX Corps, the Anzac Mounted Division and the 53rd Division moved out towards Khuweilfeh on November 3rd. During the following days they were heavily counter-attacked by the *19th Division*—a "crack" formation just arrived from Europe. Attack alternated with counter-attack until the 7th, when the Turks withdrew after the toughest close-quarter fighting of the whole campaign.

De Lancey Forth and his battalion of Cameliers again greatly distinguished themselves; and, just as they were stretched to their last man, they were supported in dramatic fashion by Captain Cain, who galloped his squadron of Australian machine guns into position on their left, though suffering heavily in the process.

The Turks threw in their reserves at this point, because they thought we were going to move by Hebron on Jerusalem; and our desperate fighting there proved of great value, for it immobilised those reserves during the period when Chetwode was making his decisive attack.

Further to the north, Colonel Newcombe, who had trekked from Aqaba with 70 British camelry and a few Arabs to join in the fray, had blocked the road to Hebron, 20 miles N.E. of Beersheba, for a space of 40 hours. He tried to raise the Arab tribes to his standard, but without success. Then, having caused a panic in Hebron, attracted hostile troops from every direction, and himself suffered severe losses, he was forced to surrender.

The Camels Did it

On occupying Beersheba, we had tried to draw the local Bedouins to our side. We showed their sheikhs a cavalry regiment, a field battery, and even 60-pounders with Holt tractors. But they were not impressed. Then a convoy of 1,000 camels rolled up—first-class animals, in the best of condition. That touched the right chord; and, quick to see it, a staff officer bundled the sheikhs into cars and drove them to a great camel camp behind the lines, where some 10,000 equally fine specimens were on view.

"One of our smaller packets," he explained. That clinched matters. The possessors of such multitudes of these flawless creatures must be the greatest tribe in the world—undoubtedly the side to back.

[1] Some anxiety was caused by the fact that a female tank slipped in among the males. It was decided, however, in view of the advanced age of the tanks, to exercise no restraint in the matter.

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The attack of the XX Corps began at dawn on the 6th. The ex-Yeomen of the 74th Division had the toughest fighting on that hard-fought day, but by resolute courage they had won all their objectives by 1.30 p.m. At one time they were in danger from a powerful counter-attack, when a "forward observing officer of the 268th Brigade R.F.A. came up in time to range his batteries on the advancing Turks. Their line, assailed by the shrapnel, wavered, halted, and reeled back in disorder." [1]

The 10th Division had to move over a plain devoid of cover. "The advance of this grand division was a sight which will never be forgotten by those who had the privilege to see it." By 2.30 p.m., the 10th and 60th Divisions had captured the whole of the Hureira works. The Turks, however, retired to a ridge farther north, and the gap needed for the passage of the mounted troops was therefore not complete by nightfall.

Operations were resumed early on the 7th. The enemy had been reinforced, and held the Wadi es Sheria strongly. The 60th Division, however, would take no denial. "The 2/22nd Londons charged up the slope and flung the Turks back from it. Lieut.-Col. Borton, who had personally reorganised the leading waves when they were checked by heavy machine-gun fire, walking up and down his line with a supreme contempt for danger, now led a party of volunteers against a Turkish battery firing at point-blank range and captured it." [1] For this he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

[1] *Official History*, ii, p. 97.

The Cavalry Gets its Chance

At the same time the 2/20th stormed Tel es Sheria and won the priceless water-supply there. Shortly afterwards the 10th Division captured the Hureira redoubt, and the gap was then complete.

For the Desert Mounted Corps the moment so eagerly, yet in most cases vainly, awaited by cavalry on every front had come. The Anzac Division poured through the opening, and within two hours had captured Ameidat station, with 400 prisoners and quantities of trucks and stores. News arrived that the Turks had evacuated Gaza during the preceding night; and it was now hoped to cut off the retreat of the garrison. But resistance hardened. On the left of the Mounted Corps, the Australian Division was unable to make progress, and the day which had opened with such high hopes closed disappointingly.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

On the 8th the advance was continued. Away to the right the Australians captured Nejile and Jemmame. In the centre the Yeomanry fought their famous action near Huj (of which more below), and on the left the 60th Division bivouacked north-west of that village.

Early in the afternoon, Sir John Shea, commanding the 60th Division, was reconnoitring in a Ford car when he espied a large body of Turks crossing his front some three miles away, and throwing out a flank guard. Seeing some British cavalry to his right, he ordered them to charge the flank-guard and thus expose the column behind it to attack.

The 5th Mounted Brigade, to which the cavalry belonged, was on a wide front, and its battery and machine guns had been outpaced. Gray-Cheape was the senior officer on the spot. All he could lay hands on were three weak squadrons—1½ from his own regiment, the Warwickshire Yeomanry, and 1½ from the Worcestershire Yeomanry.

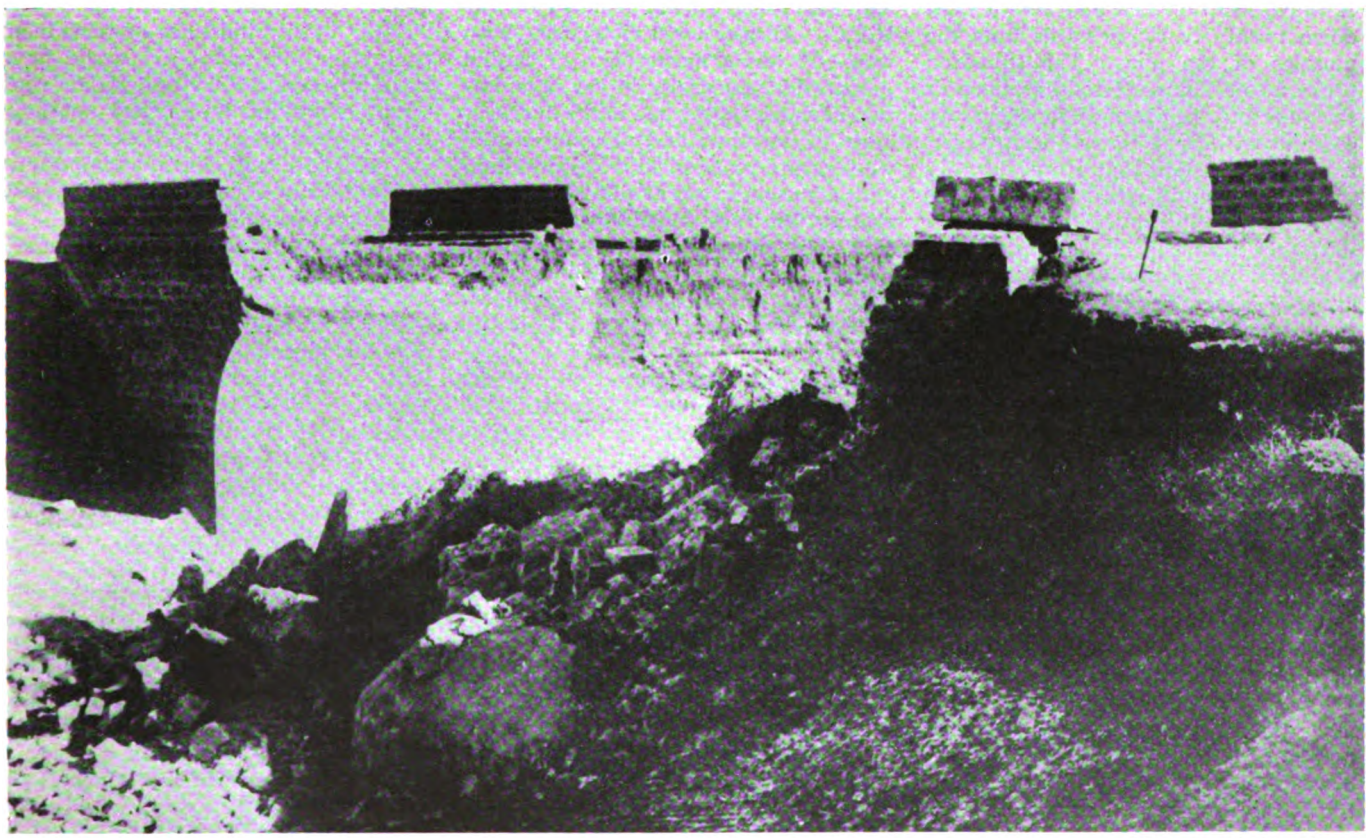

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A SHATTERED BRIDGE

The remnants of a stone bridge, formerly spanning the Wadi Hesi, after it had been destroyed by a direct hit from one of our naval guns. The Wadi Hesi is a ravine running approximately from east to west between Gaza and Mejdel, and passing within about 8 miles of the former at Deir Sineid. The defences of the wadi were captured by the XXI Corps on November 7th—8th, 1917.

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Cheape, with a sound eye for ground, saw at a glance that his only hope of success lay in rolling up the Turkish left. He therefore led his detachment to that flank, and reorganised behind a small hill. Then he despatched Allbright's squadron against the nearest infantry, Valintine's squadron and two troops under Edwards against an Austrian battery, and himself rode with two troops against a pack battery and some big howitzers.

Gallant Austrian Gunners

Allbright put the Turkish infantry to flight, but was killed in the act. Valintine and Edwards topped the hill, dived down to the flat, and then rode steeply up against the flank of the Austrian battery. But the gunners had swung round two of their guns, and fought them with magnificent bravery. Valintine and Edwards were killed, and here is the account of the only unwounded officer : [1]

" Machine guns and rifles opened on us the moment we topped the rise behind which we had formed up. I remember thinking that the sound of the crackling bullets was just like a hail-storm on an iron-roofed building.... A whole heap of men and horses went down twenty or thirty yards from the muzzles of the guns. The squadron broke into a few scattered horsemen at the guns and then seemed to melt away completely. For a time I, at any rate, had the impression that I was the only man left alive. I was amazed to discover we were the victors." [2]

Wiggin, who had replaced Allbright, saw Valintine's danger and charged to his aid. Swinging right from the captured guns, he rode with his own men and the remnants of Valintine's straight at the machine guns. The Turks then broke and fled. The flank-guard was destroyed and 11 guns captured. Further action was impossible, for 100 out of 162 horses were down, and 70 men. Unfortunately, too, no other troops were near enough to act against the bared flank of the now fleeing column.

This was as daring a charge as that at Balaklava ; but, unlike that action, it was delivered with a sound object in view, and was brilliantly conducted. Officers and men were of the cream of three hunting counties [3] and numbered among them no less than seven M.F.H. or ex-M.F.H. It was lucky, however, that the Turkish infantry did not display the courage of the Austrian gunners.

[1] Lieut. W. B. Mercer.
[2] *Official History*, ii, p. 123.
[3] *Cavalry Journal*, Oct., 1936.

It is interesting to quote here, from German sources, an account of the far-reaching effects of this minor combat : " Several bombing attacks . . . had caused big explosions in the big dump of munitions at Et Tine . . . and created wild excitement, when suddenly news spread that hostile cavalry had broken through the main Turkish line and was moving against the headquarters of the *8th Army* at Et Tine.

" Although this rumour was false and fantastic, yet it caused such agitation that many formations began to retreat without orders and broke into flight. A great number of officers and men could not be stopped till they had reached Jerusalem or Damascus. . . ." [1]

The Turks Steal Away

Early on the 7th, when a decisive assault on Gaza was intended, it was found that the Turks had slipped away and had left the town an untenanted wreck. The pursuit was at once taken up. The Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade and the 52nd Division drove in the Turkish rear-guards, and, on the 8th, seized the line of the Wadi el Hesi, though only after severe fighting.

The *8th Army* was now in full retreat, and was being heavily bombed by the R.F.C. Allenby's first victory had been won. It was a masterpiece of careful preparation, especially in the organisation of water supply and in the maintenance of secrecy ; and it showed the whole army to be filled with a resolute determination to win at all costs. Nevertheless, the Turk, thanks partly to his own stout and skilful fighting and partly to our water difficulties, which he strove ceaselessly to augment, managed to escape from the net which had been cast for him.

Allenby now transferred the weight of his attack from the XX to the XXI Corps, from the foothills of the Shephelah to the coastal road. The early rains had fallen ; the task of supply had become extremely difficult, and progress correspondingly slow. The earth-road which led north from Gaza was churned into soft mud, through which a team of 4 mules could hardly drag an empty limber. The camel (nobody's friend, and generally overloaded to spare the beloved horse) slipped and groaned and wallowed and often expired in the mire.

An immense task, bravely borne and faithfully executed, fell on the supply-services ; and while this was at its heaviest, there came a sudden, urgent demand on their transport for clothing. The troops, who had sweltered in the blistering sun and hot *khamsin* winds, were now exposed in their drill-khaki to bitter cold, which was especially severe in the Judæan hills. Fortunately the rains ceased after a while, the roads dried, and the strain was eased.

[1] Kressenstein, *Sinai*, i, p. 51. Quoted in the *Official History*.

The railway running south from Damascus to Beersheba supplied the *8th Army*, and a branch thrown out from Junction Station to Jerusalem supplied the *7th*. Thus, by seizing that station, a wedge might be thrust between the two armies, and the *7th* thrown back on the difficult line-of-supply by road to Nablus, 50 miles north of Jerusalem. The Turks fully realised the junction's value, and assembled all available forces for its protection.

Driven from an Historic Site

Allenby decided to roll up the Turkish right from the sea-coast. He realised the danger of a heavy counter-attack against his own right, but relied for its repulse on the fine fighting qualities of the Australian Mounted Division, which he had placed on that flank. Actually a powerful counter-attack did develop there on the 12th November, and drove our men out of Tel es Safi—the " Blanche-garde " of Cœur-de-Lion and the " Gath " of the Philistines—forcing them back some four miles. It would have been renewed the following day with strong additional forces, had not Leggett's Lowlanders, on the afternoon of the 12th, by the capture of an important outwork, caused the Turks to withdraw all reserves behind their lines.

On the 13th, the attack began, all divisions having their backs to the sea. The 75th on the right, fighting from 7 a.m., had carried its first objectives by nightfall. The commander—Palin—then tried to take Junction Station with his reserve brigade, and to send a party to cut the railway to the north. Unfortunately, as the brigade neared the station, the Turks counter-attacked, and, in the confusion which followed, the mules of the demolition party bolted.

It seemed then that no surprise could be effected, so the brigade formed a perimeter camp for the night where it stood. Had it only pushed on, it would have captured the station with ease, and prevented the escape of several important trains, one of which was said to have contained von Falkenhayn. As things were, the junction was not occupied until early the following morning, when valuable captures were effected.

In the centre the 52nd had another bout of tough fighting over open ground,

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CAMBRAI
Then and Now

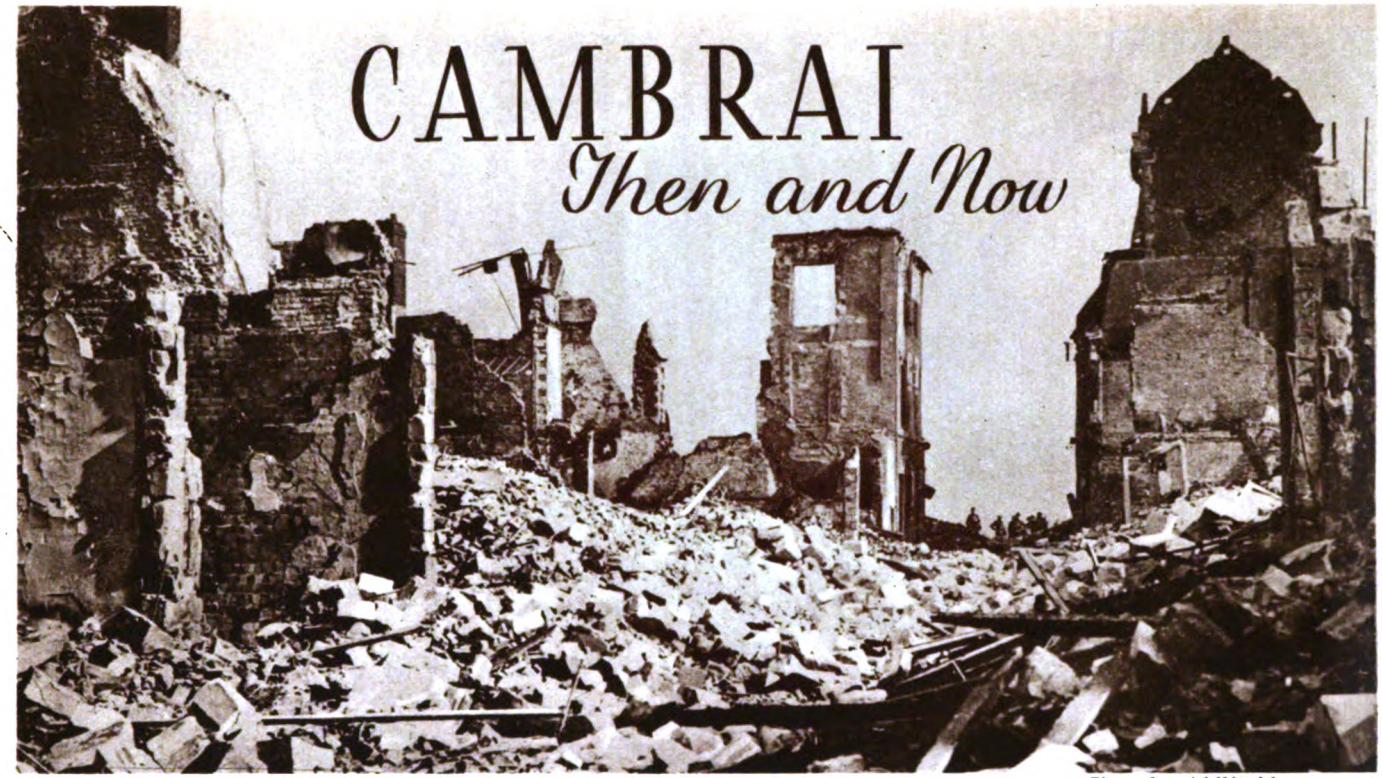

Photo: Imperial War Museum

CAPTURED !

An impressive view of the city of Cambrai as the Canadians and 57th Division troops found it on entering the town, from north and south respectively, on October 9th, 1918. By the time of this second Battle of Cambrai—the last of the battles of the Hindenburg Line —the city had been very badly damaged, and two days after the close of the fighting the main square was still burning.

Photo: A. J. Insall

RESURRECTION

This picture gives some idea of the very thorough reconstruction accomplished in Cambrai since the Armistice. In the background may be seen the Church of St. Géry, close to which lies the Place du 1es Octobre, named in memory of that triumphal day when Briton and Canadian joined hands in the city they had worked to free. Notice the tethered horse in the foreground; this animal is still widely catered for in northern France, and tethering-rings are let into the kerb in every town and village.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

ALL AWRY

The Grand' Place as it looked in October, 1918, with the Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall) in the background. Not only heavy shelling, but, more latterly, the mines exploded by the Germans prior to their retreat, contributed to the appalling damage. Cambrai is the seat of an archbishopric, and a city of great historical interest both to France and to the Low Countries. It was occupied by German forces on August 26th, 1914.

Photo: A. J. Insall

TIDIED UP

Cambrai was " adopted " by Birkenhead after the Armistice, and is once more a thriving centre of industry. On market-days, when the Grand' Place is transformed into a vast assemblage of canvas stalls, it is as difficult here as elsewhere in northern France and Belgium to realize that four years of war once supervened upon so peaceful and immemorially ancient a scene. The retouched Hôtel de Ville is almost identical with the earlier version.

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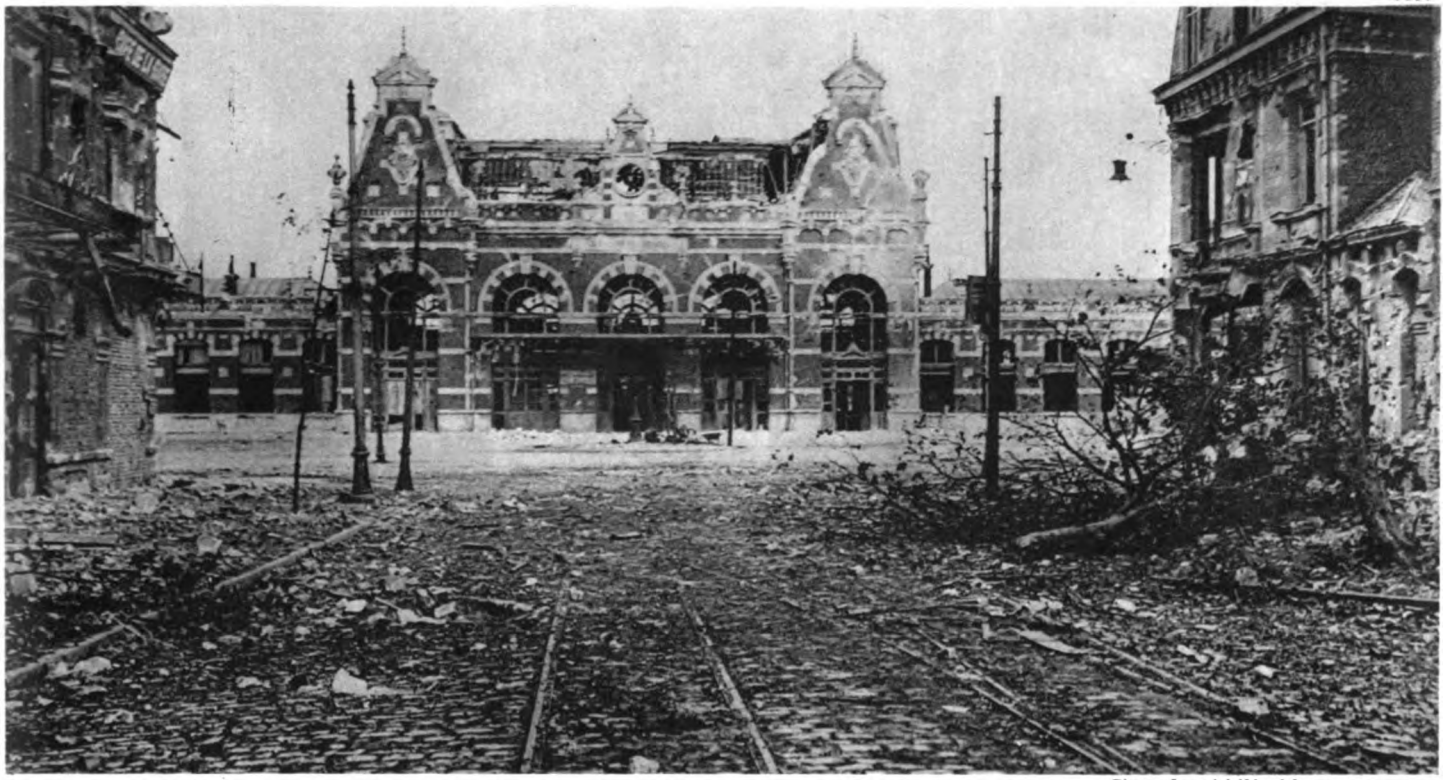

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE FORMER RAILWAY STATION

This view is of the Central Railway Station, as seen from the avenue named after it. In addition to being situated on the Scheldt (river and canal), Cambrai is on the main lines from Calais to Basle and Paris to Douai. Probably the majority of ex-servicemen to-day connect the city with the First Battle of Cambrai, November 20th–December 3rd, 1917, rather than with the closing weeks of the War. But in that famous conflict we never reached the town.

Photo: A. J. Insall

ITS SUCCESSOR

The great tank-battle of Cambrai in 1917 closed with our line still as much as five miles from the south-western side of the city, and it was indeed an almost legendary place which our forces entered a year later. Much of the ground covered in 1917 boasted neither a shell-hole nor a single strand of wire on it before the advance, and was in British hands only for ten days, after which the enemy regained possession of it and held it for another ten months.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE BROKEN BRIDGE

The German retreat of 1918 might be symbolized by broken bridges. This specimen had led across the canalized Scheldt (or Escaut) at Cambrai until the enemy's evacuation. Ernst Junger, the Hanoverian writer whose observations on the fighting at Gommecourt in 1916 have elsewhere been quoted, says of Cambrai during his countrymen's occupation of it that it was "a pleasant, friendly place." For a long time it was the headquarters of Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

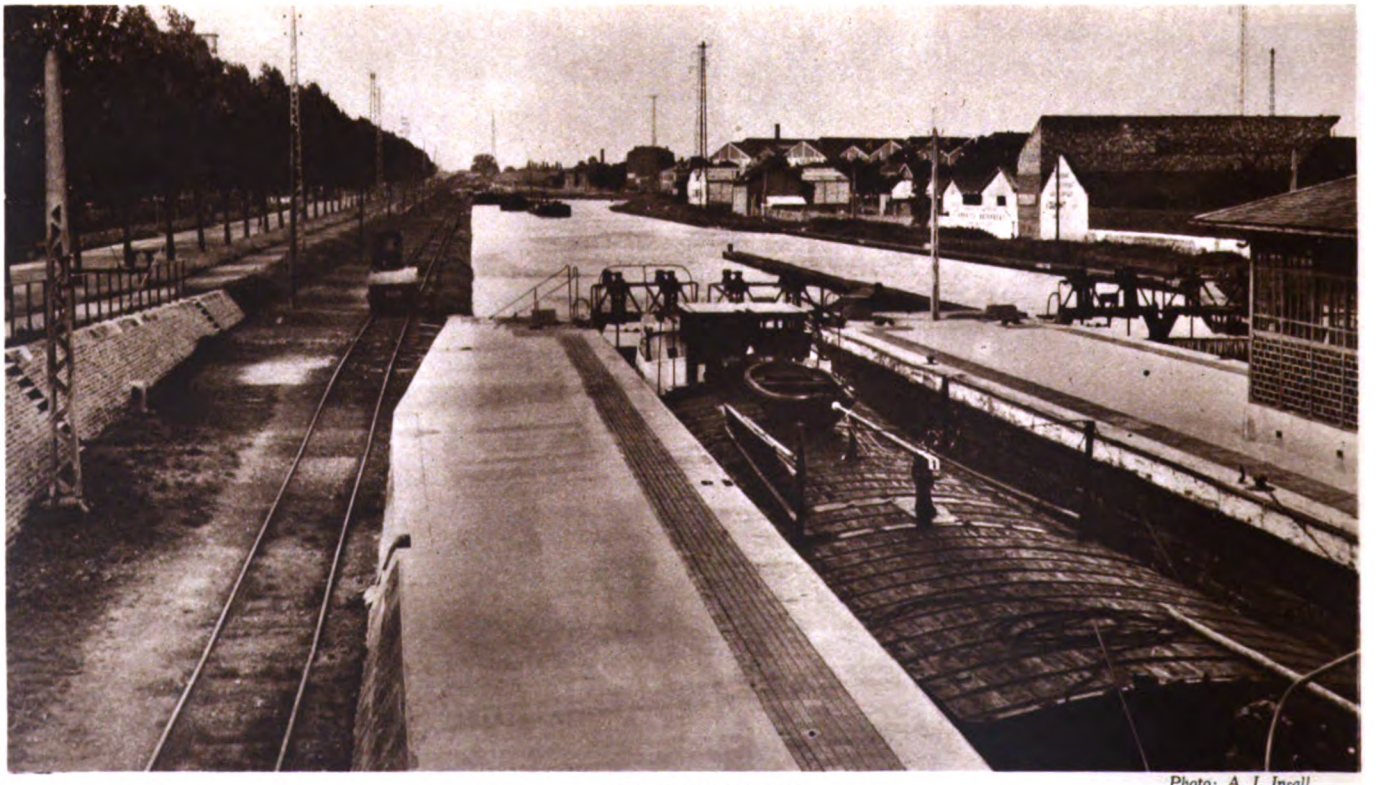

Photo: A. J. Insall

A MODERN LOCK

A barge is being hauled through one of the canal locks by an electric tractor (seen on the rails). Few French cities north of Paris combine so wide a field of modern industry with so vast a wealth of historical interest. Of ancient buildings few, alas! survived the calamitous events of 1918, and the cathedral was among the worst sufferers. Even some of Cambrai's statues of her famous sons are missing, having been removed by the invader for the metal which they contained.

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and found progress very difficult, especially at El Maghar. At 2.30 p.m., the Yeomanry Division came up on its left; and, appreciating the situation, General Barrow instructed Godwin with the 6th Mounted Brigade to take the village.

Then followed one of the most brilliant episodes of the campaign. The brigadier, having studied the ground, brought up his brigade to cover in the Wadi Jamus. Lieut. Perkins was sent forward to reconnoitre a position for the machine guns in the Wadi el Ghor. He cantered up and down it under a hail of machine-gun fire which "followed him as a spotlight follows a dancer on the stage," yet returned in safety to report a good covered position available.

Yeomen Take El Maghar

Godwin thereupon made his plan: covering fire from the Berks battery; six machine guns where they could long give supporting fire without being masked; Dorsets to left, Bucks to right, each with its own peak as objective; two machine guns with each regiment; Berks to follow with Brigade H.Q.

The trot changed to a gallop as the troopers came under machine-gun fire. The left squadron of the Dorsets had the farthest to go, and arrived at the foot of the slopes with its horses blown. The men dismounted and carried their objective on foot. The remaining squadrons charged home up the steep slopes. The Turks fled, but, seeing the weakness of their opponents, who had lost heavily in horses and therefore could not pursue, took position on the flanks and reopened fire. The Yeomanry then turned on to them not only their own machine guns, but also the twelve they had captured; and that decided the issue.

Godwin now ordered the Berks to clear the village; and, as they swept past the left of the infantry, Pollok-McCall—the nearest brigadier—picked up a rifle and led his Scots Fusiliers and Scottish Borderers forward. Close behind the Yeomen they crashed through the streets. The Bucks, covering the exits with their machine guns, inflicted many casualties. Prisoners at El Maghar alone amounted to 1,100.

The Yeomanry lost 130 men[1] and 265 horses. But for the casualties to horses, there would have been far more captures. This operation differed from its predecessor at Huj in that there was ample time for reconnaissance and for arranging supporting fire. Both feats rank high in the annals of British cavalry.

Away to the left, had the 22nd Brigade shown the same determination, it might have reached the railway, and, by cutting off vast numbers of Turks, have turned the retreat into a rout.

St. George's Native Village

On the following day, the *8th Army* was again in full retreat. On the 15th, the Desert Mounted Corps, pushing forward on both flanks, won ground as far as Ludd, the legendary home of our patron saint, and took many prisoners. Only the New Zealanders on the extreme left encountered serious resistance, being heavily engaged all day to the west of Ramle.

The Yeomen again distinguished themselves. Barrow directed them to take the rocky ridge of Abu Shushe, east of the railway. The 6th Brigade, much reduced in strength, moved against the western face, and repeated its brilliant performance of the 13th with equal gallantry and under equally skilled leadership. Never in history, probably, has a brigade placed two such victories to its credit within a space of 3 days.

The general result was that Allenby, in inflicting this defeat, had achieved his main object of separating the *8th* from the *7th Army*.

He now decided to contain the *8th Army* on the coastal plain, to drive the *7th* away from Jerusalem, and to occupy the Holy City. For this purpose he despatched the Yeomanry Division, supported by the 52nd Division, into the Judæan hills, to try to cut the road to Nablus north of Jerusalem. The 75th Division on their right was to seize the Bab el Wad—the gate of the hills—and then move to a point just north of the city.

The Turks, however, had been reinforced from the *Yilderim* Army, and developed a sturdy resistance. They were defending a country in which the ancient Jews had held their own while the tribes of the plains had been swept out of existence; a country where a few hundred skilful fighters might well have kept thousands at bay. There was but one road for the advance, and that was crumbling. The tracks were barely recognisable, and were unfit for wheels. Moreover, the true rains broke in furious thunderstorms and added to the immense difficulty of supply. Rations were therefore scarce, and the cold intensified by lack of clothing.

75th Division Captures Nebi Samwil

Yet the spirit of the soldiers never quailed. The yeomanry, in advance on the left and in a country hopelessly ill-suited to cavalry, fought themselves to a standstill and had to be withdrawn into line with the other divisions. It was a country for infantry and pack-artillery. The 52nd were now hardened veterans of many a fierce fight. The 75th—another fine division—contained many units experienced in mountain warfare. Together they pressed the Turk back in spite of his many advantages.

The 75th took Nebi Samwil—the tomb of the prophet Samuel, the "Mispah" of the Old Testament, the "Montjoye" of the Crusaders; but that was the limit of their advance, as it had been that of Richard Cœur-de-Lion. The hill on which it stood dominated the Holy City, which was almost as sacred to the Moslem as to the Christian, and was of immense political importance. The Turks counter-attacked fiercely and repeatedly in order to remove this dangerous threat. They failed indeed to drive back our infantry, but they enforced a stalemate. Both our divisions strove bravely to make a further advance, but in vain.

On the 24th, Allenby decided to discontinue the operation for the moment, owing to the sufferings of the troops and to their severe losses. He issued orders for the relief of the XXI Corps by the XX. The 60th, 10th and 74th Divisions, in that order from south to north, were hurried up, all fresh and refitted, to take over from the Yeomanry, the 52nd, and the 75th, which were withdrawn to the plain. Away to the south, the 53rd moved through Hebron towards Bethlehem.

These movements took time, for the weather was abominable and the tracks barely passable; so that it was not until the night of the 7/8th December that a general advance could be made. Owing to very careful previous reconnaissance, and to skilful leading, the timing and direction of movements were in all cases perfect. In many places the Turks were surprised in their trenches, and everywhere the positions were stormed, the chief honours of the day falling perhaps to the Londoners.

Occupation of Jerusalem

On the 9th, Jerusalem was occupied—a memorable day for Christendom. When the advance was renewed, it was found that the Turks had retired to the east and north. A screen was then thrown round those sides of the city, while the air-force undertook a vigorous pursuit. Allenby had insisted, at a considerable sacrifice of military ad-

[1] Among the killed was Captain Neil Primrose, M.C.—Lord Rosebery's second son, and a man of high promise both as a soldier and a statesman.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

OUTSIDE WERVICQ STATION

Wervicq is just within the southern border of Belgium, between Comines and Menin, and the line which passes through it, connecting the two last-named towns, is a section of the Armentières—Courtrai and Armentières—Roulers routes. In this photograph the western approach to the station is shown as it appeared in November, 1918, shortly after its final capture. Wervicq's military history belongs to the beginning and the end of the Great War period, for it was first penetrated by British cavalry on October 18th—19th, 1914, after which the enemy held it continuously during four years.

vantages, that no operations were to take place in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, so that these two cities were wholly spared the ravages of war.

Early in the morning, the Mayor ventured forth to hand over the keys. He had some difficulty, however, in finding anyone to accept them. First of all he met the mess-cooks of the 2/20th London—Privates Church and Andrews—who, no doubt, referred him to the "quarterbloke" away back. Then he ran into the outposts of the 2/19th, who were equally sure it was none of their business. Finally, Colonel Bayley, who was reconnoitring with his battery-commanders for forward gun-positions, took the keys from him and sent forward Major Cooke, with an orderly, to take over the post-office.

These two were thus the first British soldiers privileged to enter the Holy City. Shortly afterwards, a few more gunners arrived there, then the Westminster Dragoons, followed by the 5th Welch, from Bethlehem. An hour later the 2/17th London took over guard duties, and Maj.-Gen. Shea, who was greeted with wild enthusiasm by the inhabitants, formally accepted the surrender in Allenby's name.

According to historical records, this was the 35th occupation. 3,000 years had passed since David took the city from the Jebusites. Since then many great conquerors had entered it—Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Godefroi de Bouillon (leader of the First Crusade), and the noble and chivalrous Saladin. The British troops marched in with joyful faces, and later on wandered about recalling half-forgotten Bible stories. Ancient ruins make but little appeal to the average man; but to tread the way of the Cross, to see the Holy Sepulchre, the hall where Pilate judged, and the yard where the crowing cock shamed Peter, was to give lively colour to the lessons of childhood.

Allenby Enters the Holy City

Sir Edmund Allenby made his formal entry into Jerusalem on the 11th December. The ceremony was simple, but impressive. He drove up by car, and entered by the Jaffa Gate on foot, passing between guards selected from the British nationalities which had participated in the campaign, and accompanied by French and Italian officers as well as by Chetwode and the principal staff officers. On the steps of the citadel, a proclamation was read in many languages promising protection to all sacred buildings and freedom of

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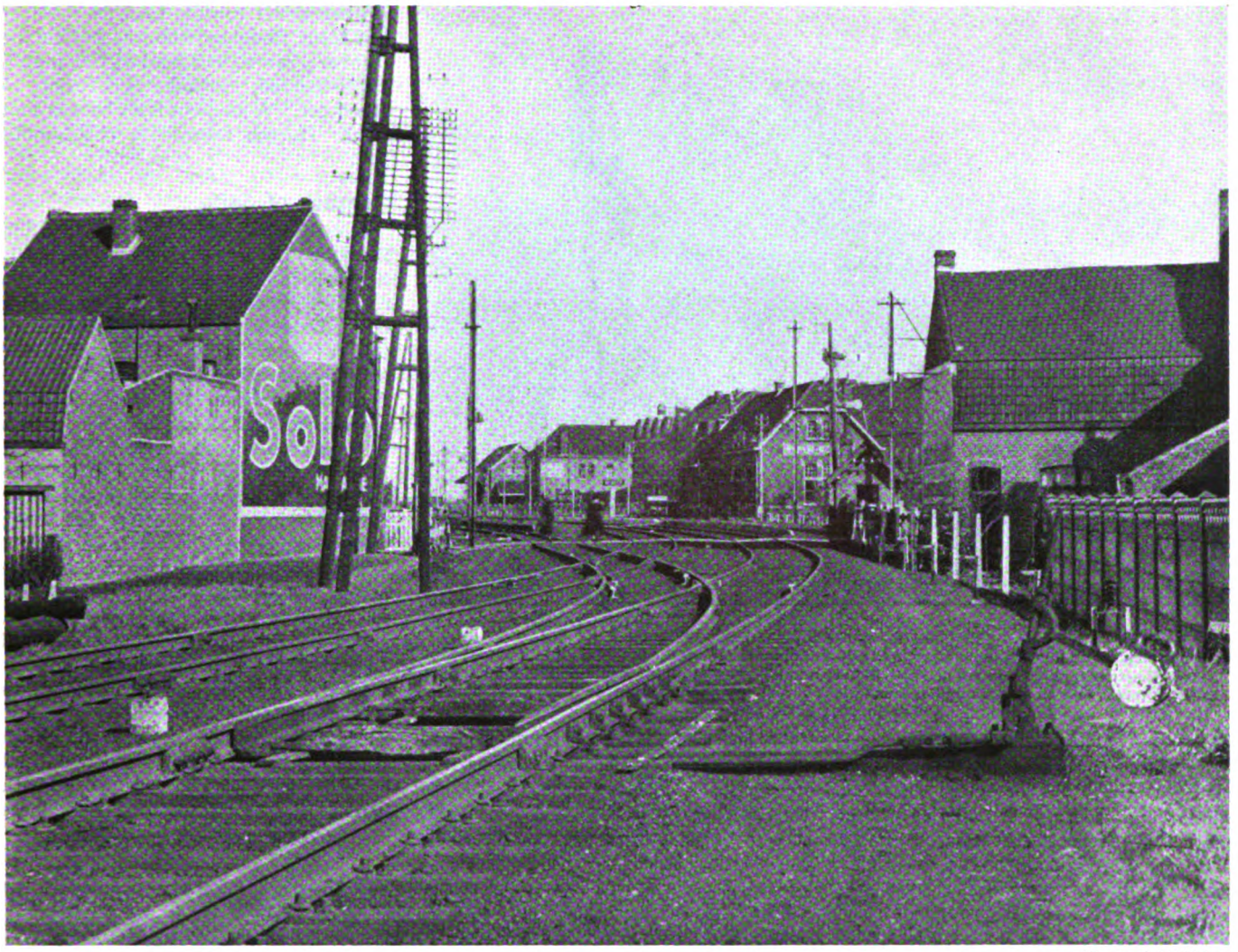

Photo: G. T. Watson.

REBUILT AND ENLARGED

During our offensive of July—November, 1917, Wervicq was repeatedly bombed by the Allies on account of both its station and its billets. In the great attack launched on October 14th, 1918, sharp fighting for the high ground to the west of the place was succeeded by Wervicq's capture on the 16th Since the Armistice the town has been much enlarged; the station is entirely new, a double track has replaced the single, and a subsidiary station, on another line connecting Wervicq with Lille, has also been improved. Yet a third line leads from the station shown here to Dadizeele.

worship to the adherents of the three great religions.

The expulsion of the Turks from Jerusalem marks the end of a definite stage in the campaign. Within a space of 40 days, without any great allotment of artillery such as was common on the western front, and almost without tanks (such as were there were of little use), the British forces had driven armies of Turks, armed with a multitude of machine guns, from a whole series of strongly-prepared positions. They had advanced some 60 miles, had captured 12,000 prisoners and 100 guns, and had inflicted casualties numbering 25,000, with a loss to themselves of only 18,000.

To have achieved such striking results in the face of unfavourable conditions, and against a stout and well-handled foe, is a proof of fine leadership, and a tribute to the indomitable courage of the troops. Had it not been for the extreme scarcity of water in the early stages, and, later, the difficulty both of movement and of supply resulting from the rains, there is little doubt but that the whole Turkish Army would have been rounded up and captured.

Prior to the fall of the city Falkenhayn had made desperate efforts to retrieve the situation and win time for the arrival of such reinforcements as might enable him to retain his hold over it. He had discovered a wide gap between the left of the XX Corps and the right of the XXI, and accordingly, he concentrated thereon all the troops on which he could lay hands.

From the 27th November to the 3rd December there raged in that area bitter fighting, distinguished by the heroic conduct of many small detachments. Eventually the gap was closed, and the whole line held so firmly that preparations for the capture of Jerusalem could proceed.

Three Anecdotes of Heroism

Many of the incidents of that week call for record, but within the limits of the available space only three can be mentioned. Here is one:

Three companies of the 4th Northamptons, supported by a battery, were attacked by about 2,000 Turks, who, after fighting all day, had reached a line within 400 yards of their opponents. They were seen to be preparing for the final assault; and it was clear that, as soon as night fell, they would be able to overwhelm their opponents by weight of numbers.

Lieut.-Col. Brown, who was commanding the battalion, therefore de-

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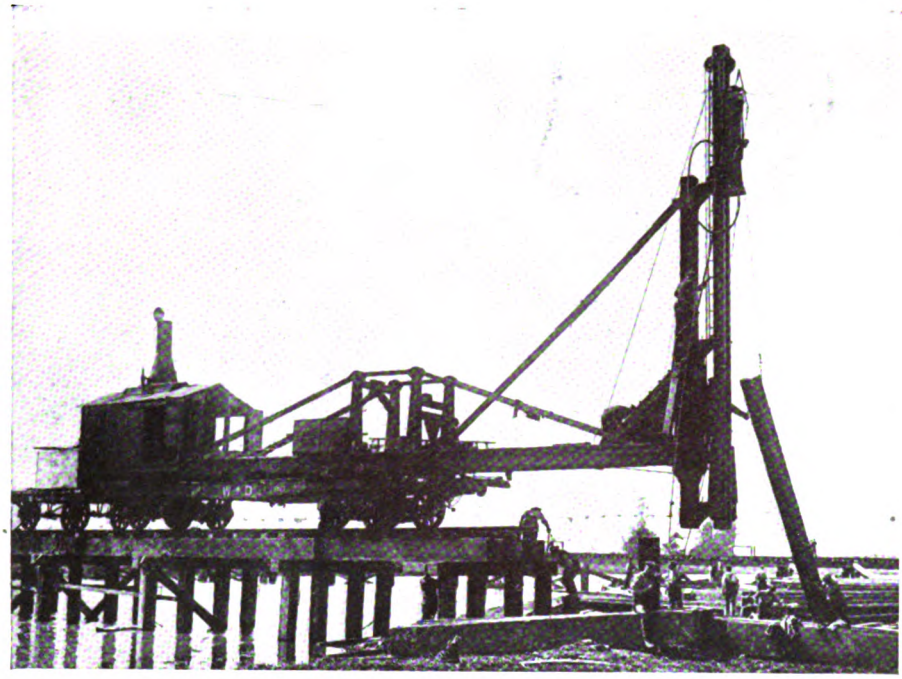

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BUILDING A RAILWAY BRIDGE

The four pictures on this and the next page show four aspects of one of the major tasks falling to the lot of the R.E.—to wit, railroad construction. In the present photograph a large pile-driver, mounted on a railway truck, is seen at work on the foundations of a railway bridge over the River Canche near Étaples, May 30th, 1918.

cided to counter-attack. He ordered his flank companies each to leave one platoon in position, and with the other three to move to a flank under cover and from there strike the enemy. It was a bold policy, which, on the face of things, had hardly a hope of success; yet, dashingly executed, it proved entirely successful.

Here is a second incident: Major Rees, with a party of 80 men of the 25th Welch Fusiliers, was ordered to occupy the village of Foqa. Being uncertain, in the confused situation, in whose possession it was, he approached cautiously. He found the Turks in occupation, but with arms piled and cooking food. The slightest hesitation would have meant destruction. He therefore dashed in and summoned them to surrender; and, luckily for him, they did so. He was then able to send off 450 prisoners, and still carry out the task assigned to him.

And here is the last episode: A gap had to be stopped by a party of the 4th Royal Scots Fusiliers. The poor Lowlanders had only just come out to rest after bitter fighting and dreadful hardships. They were therefore furious with the Turks for dragging them back to the line and naturally wanted to get their own back. So, having beaten them, they pursued them vengefully with bombs. And one of the party was heard to cry as he hurled bomb after bomb: "They mairched us a hunder miles! (Tak' that, ya——!) An we've been in five fechts! (Anither yin, ya——!) And they said we were relieved! (Tak that, ya——!) And we're oot of oor beds anither nicht! (Swalla that, ya——!)."[1] 2nd Lieut. Boughey, who was leading the bombers, ran right ahead of them, and, single-handed, forced 25 Turks to surrender. A moment later he was shot dead. He was awarded a posthumous V.C.

Capture of Jaffa

Shortly after the Battle of Junction Station, Jaffa was captured. It was the best port in Palestine, and from it ran a road and a railway to Jerusalem. Both the harbour and the lateral communication were badly needed for the organisation of the British line during the forthcoming winter, but they were both threatened by the Turk from his position on high ground north of the Auja river. Allenby, therefore, decided to deny to the enemy any power of interference with his plans, by thrusting him back out of range to the north—a project which entailed the forcing of a passage across the river.

This river was a formidable obstacle, 40 feet wide (wider at the mouth) and 10 feet deep. It was fordable only at the bar, where the Turks had placed an entrenched camp to prevent a crossing. The stone bridge and mill-dam at Hadra—the normal point of passage—had been destroyed. The ground on both banks was muddy and in places

[1] *The 52nd (Lowland) Division*, p. 471.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A MILE A DAY

Such was the speed at which this particular line progressed when under construction by men of the 110th Company R.E., during early May, 1918. The line is broad-gauge—that is to say, of the standard gauge which we are accustomed to seeing to-day, and neither a "light" nor metre-gauge railway—and the section of it shown in the photograph is situated near Hesdin.

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marshy, and was commanded by higher ground to the north. Scattered woods and groves, however, favoured the concealment of preparations for the attack.

The operation was entrusted to the hardly-tried 52nd (Lowland) Division under General Hill; and it was a nasty proposition to tackle. The chances were that any attempt to launch bridges would be met by concentrated fire of machine guns sited in advantageous positions. Hill therefore decided to attack by night. To further the prospects of surprise, no special artillery support would be given until the crossings had been secured.

After that, the infantry were "to proceed covered by a barrage worked to a time-table. But, in order to lull the enemy into a false security, he was to be put under a drill, as regards artillery fire, and to be given a regular dose of night bombardment each evening; so that, when the real attack came, there would be no abnormal artillery action to alarm him."[1]

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

EXCAVATING A CUTTING

German prisoners labouring at the excavation of a cutting during the construction of a new locomotive depôt at Rang du Fliers, June 25th, 1918. By the end of the War the amount of new track laid had amounted to several hundred miles—a fact which to some extent offset the damage caused to lines in the battle-zone.

Bridges from Orange-boxes

The most elaborate preparations were made, the general plan being that covering forces should be thrown across on rafts and light bridges, and that, bridgeheads having been established, the remainder of the troops should follow on pontoon bridges. The sappers exercised considerable ingenuity in the construction of bridges and rafts, making large use of house-timber, demolished sheds, and Jaffa orange-boxes. Pontoons and trestles were hurriedly brought up from Cairo.

There was much daring work in reconnaissance, of which the finest example was that given by Lieut.-Colonel Anderson and Lieut. Hills, of the Highland Light Infantry. These two officers swam well out to sea, crossed the mouth of the river, and landed behind the Turkish lines. "They ascertained the position of the ford, that the depth of the water in it was about three feet, and that no obstacles had been placed below the surface."[1] As the weather was wintry, they must have had a remarkably cold swim.

The attack took place on the 20th December. There was a storm of rain, which was a help toward surprise. On the other hand, the river was swollen, which added to the practical difficulties. At 8.30 p.m., a company of the 7th Scottish Rifles crossed on rafts 1,000 yards from the mouth and acted as covering-party for the construction of two bridges. There were many troubles through the swiftness of the current, through rafts holing, and through carrying-parties floundering—and nearly foundering—in the mud.

Nevertheless, by midnight, the whole of the 156th Brigade and part of the 157th were across the stream. At once the 1/7th H.L.I. swung left, and, taking the Turks completely by surprise, cap-

[1] Bowman-Manifold, p. 53.

[1] *Official History*, ii, p. 269.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

STEADY, LADS!

It was no light task moving the massive beams and girders involved in extemporised bridge-making. This scene of hard work again comes from the banks of the Canche. In addition to the business of railroad construction, that of destruction—especially the destruction of bridges—often called for deeds of great heroism and no little ingenuity.

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tured the trenches covering the ford. Shortly afterwards the 1/4th and 1/7th R. Scots took Slag Heap Farm and Sheikh Muwannis; and then, at 1 a.m., the remainder of the 157th Brigade began to cross.

Crossing the Auja

Unfortunately the marks previously set at the water's edge to indicate the ford had been swept away by the flood. Lieut.-Colonel Anderson, whose battalion was to be the first to cross, at once stripped and swam about until he found the ford, now four feet below water. The 6th H.L.I. then linked arms and crossed in fours, suffering 30 casualties from shell-fire in doing so. At 2 a.m. the brigade, having completed its passage, moved north, captured its final objective—Tel el Rekhit—and consolidated a line there.

Away to the right, near the Stone Bridge, the enemy was known to be very strong; so the attack started much later, in the hope that his attention would be distracted by the operations already described. By 4 a.m. the 155th Brigade had put two battalions across there, and by 6 a.m. had taken Hadra and Stone Bridge, though not without heavy fighting. These captures completed the operation, which had proved wholly successful. The Turks had been driven, in a few hours, from a position of great natural strength, with a loss of 300 prisoners, the British casualties numbering only 102. A bold conception, finely executed, had won victory.

With this battle, a grand division disappears from the scene in Palestine. The 52nd had taken a prominent part in all the great battles from Romani to El Auja, and had won lasting fame for dogged determination and resolute fighting. It was soon to display the same qualities in the western theatre.

It is interesting to compare the passage of the Auja with the larger undertaking at Suvla. On both occasions a limited area of ground had to be won and consolidated. On both occasions the Turks were taken by surprise, and the passage successfully effected. But, whereas at Suvla, when the main difficulty had been conquered, confusion alternated with inactivity, on the Auja each unit marched at the appointed time to the appointed place, and carried out its appointed task. In two years our young soldiers and their leaders had learnt much in the hard school of war.[1]

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE SURRENDER OF JERUSALEM

A very amusing anecdote concerns the formal surrender of Jerusalem to the British. On the morning of December 9th, 1917, the Turks having unexpectedly vanished, out came the Mayor to hand over the city keys. But to whom to hand them was another matter. First he met two mess-cooks of the 2/20th London, who were looking for water and had lost their way. They declined the honour. Next he met two sergeants of the 2/19th London (with whom the mayoral party is here seen). These also refused the keys, and the Mayor continued on his way, to encounter two artillery officers out on reconnaissance. The officers said they would telephone about it, and went away. Finally the perplexed dignitary met with an R.F.A. brigade-commander, who, after earnest questioning, sent Major Cooke, one of his battery-commanders, with his orderly and one Arab policeman, to take possession of Jerusalem post office. Such was the first British entry into the Holy City.

Making Jerusalem Secure

After the success of the 52nd Division, the 54th made a considerable advance on its right. The whole front of the XXI Corps was then in a satisfactory position. On the right flank, however, the Turks were still uncomfortably near Jerusalem; and Allenby therefore directed the XX Corps to press them back to a line 12 miles north of the Holy City. This project had been in his mind ever since the occupation; and, in order to bring it about, he had devoted the bulk of his labour resources to the construction and improvement of roads.

By this action, he effected a considerable change in the military situation. During the first advance on Jerusalem, it had been found impossible either to supply with food or to support with artillery troops moving through the hills north-west of Jerusalem. With the new road system these disabilities had been removed. The British could now strike in an easterly direction against

[1] It should of course be understood that the 52nd (Lowland) Division had not been present at Suvla Bay.

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the Turkish communications with the north; and, consequently, something much less costly and more effective than a direct attack northwards astride the Nablus road was feasible.

Chetwode planned to have two attacks—left and right—a connecting-link between them, and a guard to the right flank. The left attack, under Longley, containing the 10th Division and an attached brigade, would move from west to east along three parallel ridges, with its right directed on a point some seven miles north of Jerusalem. The right attack, consisting of the 60th Division, would strike north on both sides of the Nablus road. The link would consist of the 74th Division under Girdwood, and the flank-guard would be furnished by the 53rd Division.

When all the preparations were well under way it was discovered through intercepted and decoded wireless messages that Falkenhayn was intending an attempt to recover Jerusalem by attacks from the north and north-east. Chetwode at once decided that he would not anticipate this move, but would allow his original plan to stand. Then, when the Turk was sufficiently involved, he would let loose his troops upon him from front and flank.

The Turks Launch 8 Attacks

The attack fell, early on the 27th December, on the forward lines of the 53rd and 60th Divisions. The Turks delivered no less than eight assaults with picked troops, and won a few advanced positions. Chetwode, having had previous warning, through a prisoner, of the details of the Turkish movement, had ordered Longley to begin his attack at daybreak. By nightfall, the "left attack" had gained all its first objectives, and the 53rd and 60th Divisions had virtually maintained their positions, without so much as drawing seriously upon their brigade-reserves.

Chetwode had now to settle whether to allow the 60th Division still to remain on the defensive and thus involve the Turks further in the net, or to attack both from the west and south. In view of the very difficult country confronting Longley, he decided on the latter course. By doing so, he was sacrificing the possibility of inflicting a really serious defeat upon the enemy; but he was making certain of fulfilling the letter of Allenby's intentions.

On the 28th, the 60th Division launched its attack, and progressed steadily northwards toward Bire, while Longley and Girdwood converged on the same point from the west and south-west. By the close of the day the Turks had been everywhere driven back, and a new British line had been established 6 miles in advance of the old, giving the requisite "elbow-room" about Jerusalem.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE LAST CRUSADE

It was in A.D. 1099 that Godefroi de Bouillon entered Jerusalem at the head of the warriors of the First Crusade. On December 11th, 1917, General Allenby entered the ancient city after a crusade very different, it is true, in method and even in motive, but perhaps no less thrilling to those who will read of it in generations to come. This photograph shows the General with his officers, British and French, entering by the Jaffa Gate. (Allenby is the figure half-hidden by the leader. The latter is Barton Pasha.) The capture was, according to tradition, the 35th which the Holy City had undergone.

Of the Turks, over 1,000 were buried on the field of battle; but the remainder got clear with all their artillery, and left only 558 prisoners in our hands. They had indeed suffered a severe repulse, but they had escaped disaster.

Having made secure a line well to the north of both Jaffa and Jerusalem, General Allenby was now in a position to rest his troops before putting into execution his further plans. After weeks of success the men were in fine trim, but units were much under strength, and moreover time was necessary for re-equipment and for the arrival of reinforcements.

The next big attack upon the Turks was planned for April, 1918. In March all was prepared, when the German offensive on the Somme changed every-

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thing. General Allenby, instead of being in a position to launch his veteran divisions once more against an enemy with whose ways and methods of fighting they were well acquainted, found himself obliged to send several of the best of them to France, where at that time the British Expeditionary Force was hard pressed and in desperate need of reinforcements in the shape of seasoned troops. Thus for a space there was comparative peace in Palestine while reinforcements from Mesopotamia were absorbed and reorganisation carried out.

It is full time to turn again to the Arab rebellion, which we left after the capture of Wejh. Lawrence had now a small regular force in training, and, with Faisal's help, had created a " ladder of friendly tribes " from Medina to Damascus, up and down which his regular force might move against the Turkish communications.

Lawrence's Brilliant Feat at Aqaba

In July he captured Aqaba by a brilliant feat of arms. Instead of attacking from the sea, in which case the whole garrison might have escaped, he struck from the land side, making use of a local tribe whose sympathies he had enlisted. The possession of this port enabled him to break with the Hedjaz theatre, and to bring his operations into connection with those of the British armies in Palestine; for Aqaba was 700 miles from Mecca, and only 130 miles from Gaza.

Allenby, who had just arrived, at once realised what an immense help an Arab force would be on his right flank. He therefore took Faisal under his control as an army commander, and supplied him with such weapons, munitions, and camels as he could spare.

After the fall of Jerusalem, the Arabs closed the gap by which the Turks might have moved round the south end of the Dead Sea against the British communications. They continued to raid the Hedjaz railway, and did much to stop the Turkish grain-traffic on the Dead Sea, capturing the southern port and half the grain fleet by a swoop of cavalry. Lawrence was forging his fame as a prince of guerrilla leaders.

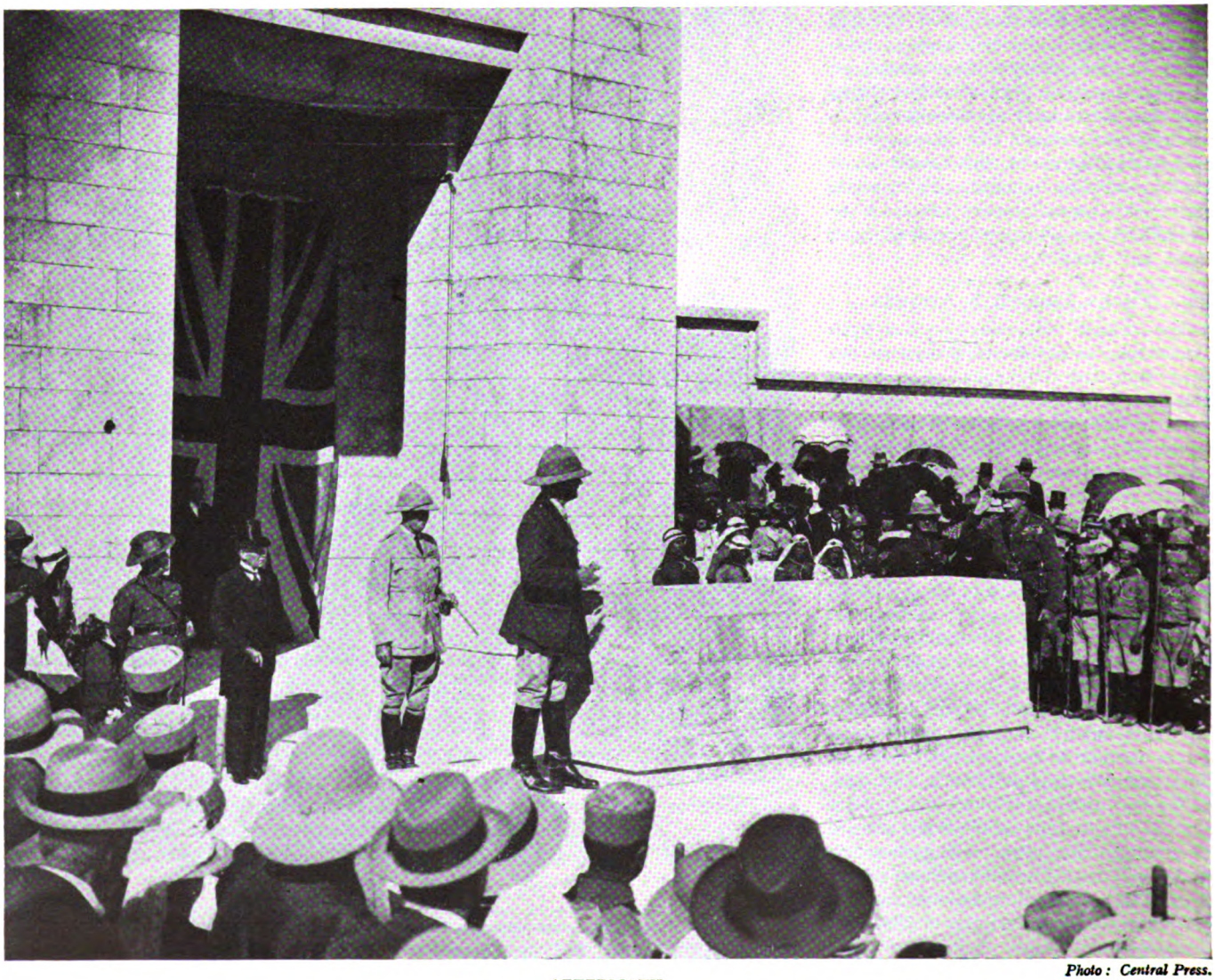

Photo: Central Press.

AFTERMATH

A post-war scene at Jerusalem Cemetery during the unveiling of the memorial to soldiers of the British Empire who fell in Egypt and Palestine and have no known graves. The eastern campaigner returning to-day to the Holy City finds many alterations in its appearance since the War, while those who go there for the first time find it difficult to realise that in 1917 the town was entirely without sanitary arrangements, and that its water-supply was derived from private rain-fed cisterns. Indeed, the Turks had allowed the place to sink into a condition rather worse than had characterised it in the 16th century, and immensely inferior to that which had prevailed during the splendid Saracen era.

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CHAPTER LXXI

TRIUMPH OF THE TANKS AT CAMBRAI

November 20th, 1917, will ever be remembered by the British Army in general and by the Royal Tank Corps in particular as the day on which the tank, that twentieth-century Horse of Troy, justified itself. Here at Cambrai tanks for the first time were thrown into the battle in adequate numbers, and from the outset success was never in doubt. That Cambrai is not recorded as one of the major victories of the Great War was not the fault of the Tank Corps. Its success so far exceeded expectation that in the hour of triumph the reinforcements necessary to exploit this fine achievement were not immediately available.

WHILST the Third Battle of Ypres was still in its early stages, there was being planned another attack on the German fortifications, of a highly novel kind. Ever since British tanks had first been employed on the Somme in September, 1916, the authorities responsible for that new Arm had felt that it was not being applied in the most profitable manner.

A New Chance for the Tanks

The failure of the tanks in the opening stages of Third Ypres reinforced that opinion—if, indeed, reinforcement were necessary, since the Tank Corps had, from the outset, remonstrated against the use of the machines on boggy ground where they would inevitably be severely handicapped, if they did not actually meet with disaster. Events proved these warnings to be perfectly justified.

Accordingly, in August, the Tank Corps staff set about searching for terrain where the tanks might be employed to better purpose; and the desired area was soon found in front of Cambrai, where the open downland offered an admirable opportunity for the machines.

The first idea was to carry out a large-scale raid which should last about 12 hours, and be conducted by some 200 tanks and one or two infantry divisions. For that purpose the area south of Cambrai, shut in on either side by two canals securing the flanks of the raiders, seemed eminently suitable; but it was less so for a decisive battle, since these canals would then cover the flanks of the enemy and confine the attackers to a narrow front.

General Byng, commanding the Third Army, in whose area lay the Cambrai sector, decided to transform the proposed raid into a regular large-scale offensive, and urged the idea upon Sir Douglas Haig. But at that moment Haig was in the midst of directing "Third Ypres"; and so long as the battle went well in Flanders—that is, up to the capture of Broodseinde on October 4th—not much thought was bestowed on the Cambrai project.

Where British Strategy Failed

Moreover, the mirage of the "breakthrough" at Ypres precluded any diversion of forces to the south. But the failures of October 9th and 12th, and the consequent abandonment of all hope of a great strategic victory in the north, brought the Cambrai attempt once more to the front. It was here that British strategy undoubtedly failed. It may be compared with a strong, resolute boxer, able to stand great punishment, who stakes his all on a single knock-out blow. To secure this one blow all his strength and vitality is concentrated, with the result that if the knock-out fails to materialise, the fight is lost.

But there is another method of fighting: namely, to employ more skill and more ringcraft; to husband strength and energy, and not to strike until the moment is ripe for following up the right with the left. Trench warfare under modern conditions was making it perfectly clear, as early as 1916, that the former method of fighting was unlikely to succeed where two well-matched opponents were pitted against one another.

It was left to a German subordinate strategist to propound this theory, and to plan the great offensive of 1918 against the British. As we know now, the great German onslaught of March, 1918, was followed by the more dangerous blow on the Lys in April. If Ludendorff had not squandered his resources in trying to secure a barren tactical victory in March, he might well have got home in April and destroyed the British Army.

A similar success might have lain in the grasp of the British if "Third Ypres" and Cambrai had been planned with foresight and better judgment. In this case the great tank attack at Cambrai might have ushered in a resounding British triumph sufficient to end the War before the Germans could bring back their seasoned legions from the East. But it was not to be.

The Battle-area

The battle-area, as already stated, consisted of an area flanked on either side by two canals, the Canal du Nord on the left, and the Scheldt Canal on the right; the distance between them averaging about six miles. On the Scheldt Canal, in the north-east corner of the area, lay the city of Cambrai, with its important railway junction, to which lines ran from north-west, north-east, and south-east, and at which the Germans could rapidly collect reserves.

Apart from the canals, no important obstacles were there to impede the progress of the tanks. There were a number of villages and small woods, but the largest wood in the zone—Havrincourt Wood—lay behind our lines, and afforded excellent shelter behind which our tanks could mass unseen.

The German defences constituting the Hindenburg Line and support line, however, were immensely strong. They consisted of wide trenches, too broad for our tanks to cross, and well provided with dug-outs sited so deep as to be unaffected by even the heaviest shells. Machine-gun posts built of concrete had been placed at frequent intervals along the trenches, and immensely thick belts of barbed wire, in many places as much as 50 yards wide, had been erected in front of the latter.

No stronger system of defence had ever yet been erected in war. The Germans were confident that it was proof against any form of attack yet devised; and, in view of the unimportant part hitherto played by tanks, con-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

REDUCED TO RUIN

Beaurains, the village whose inelegant remains appear here in a photograph taken on June 30th, 1917, lies 3 km. almost due south of Arras, in the fork made by the divergence of the Arras—Bapaume and Arras—Croisilles roads. There is also a second Beaurains, a good deal to the south, which should not be confused with the one illustrated. Beaurains-lez-Arras was captured by us on March 18th, 1917—the day which also saw our entry into Péronne.

sidered that their extra-wide trenches, and the anti-tank guns and anti-tank rifles which had been specially brought up to deal with these machines, would be more than sufficient to defeat any tank attack. Thus on this score the enemy was completely confident, and completely quiescent. It was the business of the Third Army to see that he remained in that state.

The Available Forces

Secrecy and surprise, in fact, were the essence of the whole British scheme. The forces available amounted only to seven divisions, most of which had already fought in Flanders, and had suffered heavy losses there. In addition there were three brigades (nine battalions) of tanks, made up of 376 fighting-machines, and 98 other machines, for supplies, gun-carrying, wireless, and wire-sweeping, making in all 474.

Sir Douglas Haig also put at Byng's disposal the whole of the Cavalry Corps —five divisions—and it was arranged that the French should bring up behind the battle-area two cavalry and three infantry divisions, which would be available for use if opportunity offered. The addition of this last force appears to have been an afterthought, and in the end it was never put to any use.

An immense amount of preparatory work had to be done, and the task was rendered more difficult because the area in which everything necessary for the battle had to be concentrated had been completely devastated by the Germans when they retired across it in the spring. Since that period, however, we had remade many of the roads, and had pushed railways up to within four miles of the front line.

Even so, there was none too much time to do all that was required. The whole tank force had to be brought in by rail, and moved secretly up to its place of assembly by night, together with all the petrol, oil, grease, and ammunition for it. Nearly 700 guns, making, with those already there, a total of over 1,000, had also to be assembled, with their ammunition.

Five of the divisions taking part in the attack were training in back-areas when the battle was decided on, and came up by road and rail—again by night. In addition there were the five divisions of the Cavalry Corps, as aforementioned, which had come in by a circuitous route in order to avoid clashing with the many other columns bound for the same destination.

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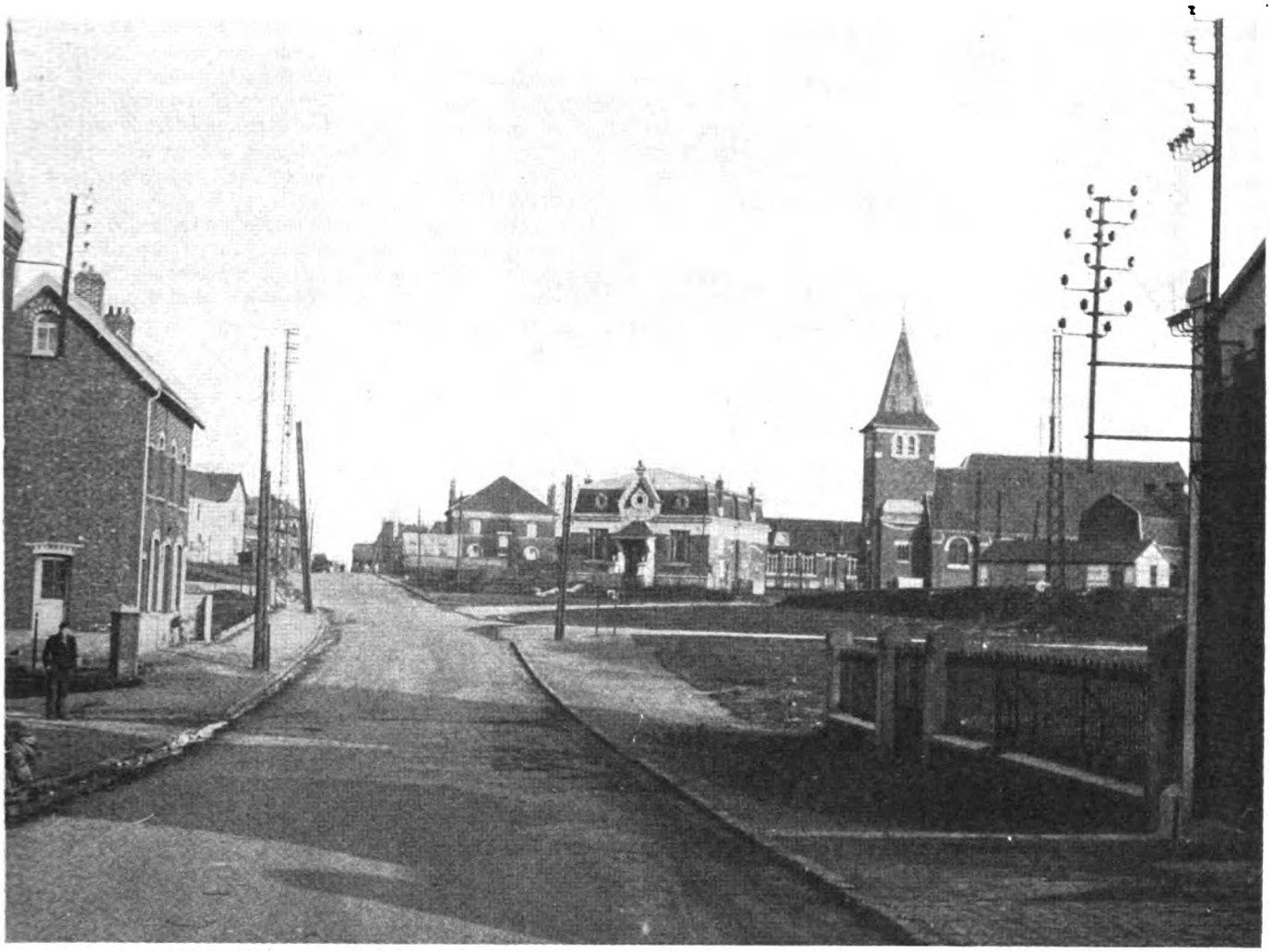

Photo: G. T. Watson.

RESTORED TO REASON

Although Beaurains was not quite reached by the Germans in their push of March—April, 1918, it is probable that they saw its ruins from afar, since, as our photographs indicate, it lies on the crest of an appreciable rise. The one British cemetery now to be found here was constructed soon after the capture in March, 1917, and includes among its dead a large proportion from the 14th ("Light") Division. Altogether there are 303 United Kingdom, 14 Canadian, and 4 German graves.

Fascines for the Tanks

The Tank Corps preparations were stupendous. A means had to be devised for crossing the 12-foot-wide trenches of the Hindenburg Line, since the utmost width of trench that could then normally be crossed by a tank was 10 feet. The solution adopted was the provision of huge fascines—big bundles of brush-wood, weighing nearly two tons—which were to be carried on the nose of each machine. When the wide German trenches were reached, the tank was to drop in its fascine, to form, as it were, a stepping-stone on which it could get over.

Four hundred tons of brush-wood had to be cut up to form these devices, and 2,000 fathoms of chain were used to bind them together. The chains were wound round and round the bundles, and tightened by two tanks pulling at either end in opposite directions. So tightly were they fastened that some months later an unfortunate infantryman, looking for firewood, and filing through the chains of one of the fascines to get it, was killed by the force by which the bundle sprang open.

In addition, 70 tons of wood were sawn up to make 110 tank sledges, to carry supplies to be towed by the supply tanks. The amount of tank stores deposited in the battle-area included 165,000 gallons of petrol, 55,000 pounds of grease, 54,000 rounds of gun ammunition, and five million rounds of machine gun ammunition. No less than 127 tanks had to be overhauled and repaired before they were fit to go into action.

The precautions taken to ensure secrecy were elaborate, wide-spread, and in many cases amusing. The Tank Corps headquarters, when it moved south for the battle, was labelled "Tank Corps Training Office"; while at one of the tank brigade headquarters a room was filled with faked maps of other areas and faked plans, all marked "Secret," and was kept locked with a "No admittance" sign on the door. It is not known, however, whether any German spy was really taken in by this elaborate piece of deception.

Fooling the Foe

At a point far away from the battle-zone six tanks were detrained at a siding by day, and moved into a wood, and then went back after dark. This stratagem was repeated for several days on end, and apparently deluded the enemy into believing that a large tank concentration was being carried out in the wood. All moves into the area, as

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has been said, took place by night, but by day frequent convoys of empty lorries went away northward, so as to deceive the German air observers.

None of the divisions to take part in the attack went into the line until the preceding night. Only a few officers and selected men were allowed in the front trenches to see the ground; and as one of the attacking divisions—the 51st—was a Highland division, its reconnoitring parties had in place of their kilts to put on trousers, lest any man be seen or captured, and reveal the fact that a fresh division had arrived.

Even the Tank Corps Headquarters staff, except the four officers whose duty it was to work out the plan of battle, were informed of the attack only three days beforehand, and these officers, when they went into the battle-area, took off their staff badges so as not to be recognised, and even went so far as to wear blue glasses.

One absolute essential for success was that the infantry and the tanks should train together, and find out how they could best co-operate. This was all the more necessary because, as a result of recent tank failures, our infantry by this time had lost their early faith in the machines. They were therefore told to erect for themselves the strongest and most formidable wire entanglements they could think of; and some of them produced really fearsome obstacles. One, it was said, would have stopped anything, from a runaway traction-engine to a herd of panic-stricken elephants.

Barbed Wire Vanquished

Then, to the amazement and delight of the men who had made them, all of them were broken through and flattened to the ground by tanks advancing across them and leaving neat and symmetrical paths behind, over which the infantry could proceed at a run. The latter were immediately convinced, by the evidence of their own eyes, that tanks could go anywhere and do anything.

A very careful and detailed system of training was drawn up, by which parties of infantry were allotted to each section of three tanks, and worked with them throughout, following close behind them in file formation, and knowing exactly what, on arriving at the enemy trenches, they had to do. The rôle of every tank and each section was clearly laid down, as well as the way in which each machine was to throw its fascine and effect its crossing of the trenches. This system was

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UPSY-DAISY!

But the point is that this tank did not upsy-daisy; it became stuck in the position shown, finding the climb out of the trench too much even for its powers. By name "Hyacinth," the machine belonged to "H" Battalion, and was held up in the former German second line at a point slightly west of Ribécourt, which lies 2 km. south-east of Flesquières, and 10 km. south-west of Cambrai. The men in the trench are 1st Leicesters, and the date is the opening day of the Battle of Cambrai, November 20th, 1917.

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rehearsed again and again in the training-areas behind the line, until it became second nature to everybody.

There was another novel feature of the battle. Previously, all great attacks had opened with a heavy artillery bombardment, continuing for hours, days, and even for weeks. This procedure had the grave disadvantage that all hope of surprise was thereby sacrificed. Hitherto, also, it had never been possible for the artillery to fire accurately on to targets allotted to it, unless it had first "registered" its guns by firing occasional shells on the targets beforehand. Before Cambrai, however, field survey companies mapped out the battle-area with such complete accuracy that the artillery should be able to hit any target by using these maps alone. Thus preliminary registration could be dispensed with.

Vain German Suspicions

Despite all these precautions, the Germans appear to have had some vague suspicion that something was brewing on this front, for a night or two before the battle they raided our trenches, and captured several prisoners. It was an anxious moment, for these prisoners might well have given the secret away; but they knew very little, and said nothing until it was too late for the Germans to take counter-measures, so that the enemy were, in fact, caught completely unawares.

The Third Army's plan of battle divided the attack into three phases. In the first, the Hindenburg Line and Hindenburg Support Line were to be captured along the whole front; a division was then to push forward to seize passages over the Scheldt Canal in the sector where it runs north-west and south-east in front of Cambrai, and to capture the third enemy line of defence, known as Masnières—Beaurevoir Line, beyond it. The second phase was to be the cavalry advance. They were to seize Bourlon, isolate Cambrai, and secure the bridges over the Sensée River, cutting off the Germans in the Quéant salient to the west of it. During the third phase we were to pursue the retreating enemy in the direction of Douai and Valenciennes.

The attacking infantry consisted of the III Corps (Lieutenant-General Pulteney), of three divisions—in order, from right to left, the 12th, the 20th, and the 6th, with the 29th in reserve—and the IV Corps (Lieutenant-General Woollcombe) also of three divisions, the 51st on the right, the 62nd in the centre, and the 36th on the left. The front-line divisions were to capture the Hindenburg and Hindenburg Support Lines in two bounds, passing their rear troops through their forward units at the end of the first bound.

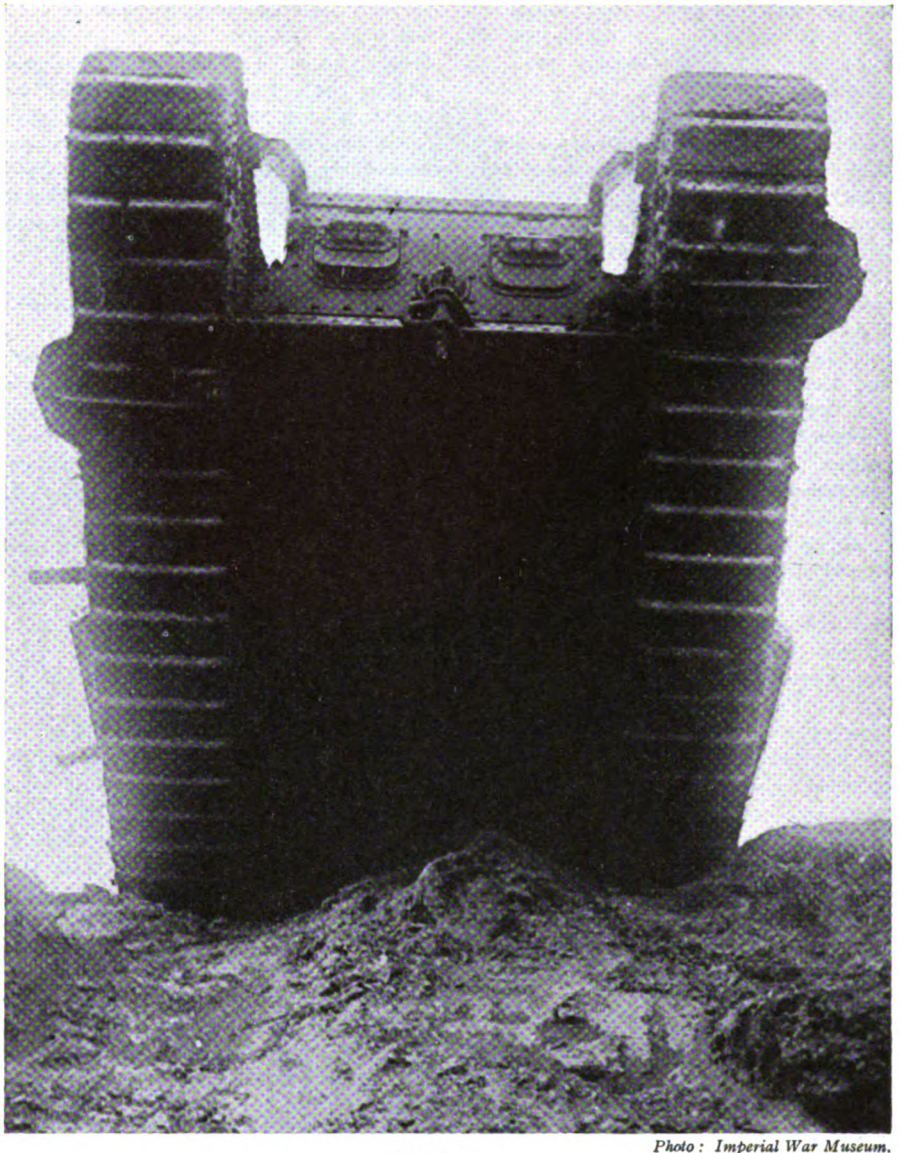

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MENACE

How a tank looked to the German defenders of a trench a second or two before the machine came plunging down upon them. . . . No wonder that in most instances they fled; there was little else to do, save to wait and be crushed to pulp by the mass of steel. Sometimes this crushing took place, and occasions are recorded when the only way in which the occupants of a tank could cope with an attack was to spin the machine round and round so that the assailants were caught and reduced to shapelessness beneath the tracks.

The second bound was to bring them beyond Lateau Wood on the right, Ribécourt and Flesquières in the centre, and Havrincourt on the left. Then the 29th Division was to pass through in the centre, cross the Scheldt Canal between Masnières and Noyelles, and capture the German third line beyond. As soon as this division had secured the canal bridges, the cavalry divisions were to pass through, surround and isolate Cambrai, cut all the railways leading to the city, and push rapidly on to the Sensée and beyond.

Apportionment of Tanks

The tanks were apportioned as follows: the 2nd and 3rd Brigades were allotted to the III Corps. "C" and "F" Battalions (84 tanks) were to assist the 12th Division. 70 tanks of "I" and "A" Battalions were to be with the 20th Division, and 14 tanks of "A" Battalion were to remain in reserve, to assist in the 29th Division attack on the German third line. The 6th Division had "B" and "H" Battalions allotted to it (82 tanks in all). To the IX Corps was assigned

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the 1st Tank Brigade ("D" Battalion and part of "E"). 70 tanks were to fight with the 51st Division, and the remainder of "E" and "G" Battalions (56 tanks) with the 62nd Division.

All these were fighting tanks. There were also 54 supply and 9 wireless tanks, equally divided between the tank brigades, and 32 tanks entrusted with the special task of sweeping away the enemy wire along the route to be taken by the cavalry.

At about 5.00 a.m., on the 20th, rockets went up in front of Havrincourt, and there was a fierce burst of hostile gun fire on the front of the IX Corps. However, this died away, and it was realised that the enemy had, after all, discovered nothing.

Punctually at 6.20, in the misty dawn of a fine winter's morning, the British barrage crashed down on the peaceful German trenches, and tanks and infantry started forward to the attack. An eye-witness thus describes the scene at that fateful moment:

"It was indescribably still. The hour was very near; it was already 6.15. We were aware of men moving forward on either side of us. We surmised it must be the 29th Division advancing in support. Suddenly the air itself seemed to reel under a colossal blow; a dull and curiously mellow roar broke forth and continued with a peculiar rhythm; the atmosphere became alive with the scream of shells.

"We were at the end of the spur by now, and on the opposite slope we could see the shells bursting on the German trenches, while behind that again rose a huge black curtain thrown up by our smoke shells, which as they landed gave the effect of the embers of a haystack. Splinters of flame were on every side like exploding stars in the night sky. The German trenches were throwing up rockets and S.O.S. signals all the length of their line; these shone out vivid against the black curtain behind. Now the light of the dawn began to creep up quickly, a cold grey light, with little power of illumination.

"The surprise had been complete and our artillery overwhelming; the reply of the German guns was negligible."[1]

Enemy Flabbergasted

Through the clouds of smoke and mist the black masses of our tanks, followed each by its little column of infantry, came rolling ponderously forward through the thick forest of wire. The flashes of their 6-pounders lit up the moving line to right and to left. The first machines dropped their fascines down into the broad trenches which were to have checked their progress, dipped their noses in, and came up and over; the next wave turned along in front of the trenches, and the defenders' heads were kept down by enfilade fire from front and rear, while the bayonet-men and bombers behind the tanks poured through the beaten lines and attacked them hand-to-hand.

No effective resistance was possible, and no help came from the enemy's own guns in rear; only on the 62nd Division front, in the deep dug-outs of Havrincourt village, did the Germans succeed in putting up any fight worthy of the name. Within two-and-a-half hours the whole of the Hindenburg Line outpost zone and front system was in our hands. Masses of prisoners were streaming back to our cages, and leap-frogging battalions and tanks were passing forward for the attack on the enemy second line.

In another two hours, well before noon, this too had been almost completely overrun; but there had been stiffer fighting on the way. The enemy had had warning enough to extemporise a defence, and to hurry forward the few troops immediately available. At the extreme right of the III Corps sector, the 12th Division had a fierce battle for Lateau Wood, where it was hampered by enfilade fire against its right flank beyond the Scheldt Canal; and it could not establish itself in the wood until well after midday.

Flesquières Holds Out

Far more serious, however, in its effect on the whole course of the battle, was the failure of the 51st Division to carry the ridge and village of Flesquières in this area. Since Flesquières was considered by the Germans to be a position of great tactical importance, special measures had been taken to reinforce its defence in case of need. An infantry brigade and two batteries had been earmarked for instant dispatch thither, and the artillery of the *107th Division*, which was in the act of detraining at Cambrai on arrival from Russia, was also sent forward as it became available.

Consequently, as the tanks of "D" and "E" Battalions in succession topped the rise, they came under intensive direct fire at short range from a mass of guns, and one after another were hit and disabled before the belated infantry could get forward to assist them. When at length the infantry did arrive, heavy machine-gun fire drove them in turn to the ground in front of the uncut hostile wire, and here they were held up all day.

In the late afternoon a few tanks made their way round and into the village by an unguarded route; but it was decided to wait until dawn the next day to organise a new attack under cover of a barrage. In the darkness the German garrison withdrew unmolested, abandoning a number of guns.

On completion of the capture of the Hindenburg support system, the bulk of the assaulting tanks, having accomplished their mission literally, went out of action and sought their rallying-points. The four companies detailed for exploitation, however, pushed forward, with the infantry, to clear the road for the cavalry over the Scheldt Canal and through the last German line of defence to north of it.

By midday the company drawn from "F" Battalion was on the canal-bank at Masnières, only to find the bridge broken and no troops at hand to help to force the passage. At length some infantry, followed by some cavalry, came up, but was unable to get across, even under the covering fire of the tanks. When this situation became clear, the tank commander decided to make an attempt to cross the broken bridge with a tank. The bridge collapsed, however, beneath the weight, and the tank disappeared under the water. At this point, therefore, no headway could be made.

Securing the Canal Locks

Elsewhere the canal passages fell easily into our hands. The company of "A" Battalion, operating in conjunction with the 29th Division—the Corps Reserve—secured all the locks between Masnières and Marcoing; while on its left the Company of "B" Battalion secured the latter village itself and the canal bridge beyond it, driving off a hostile party in the act of preparing the bridge for demolition. Later the infantry of the 29th Division arrived and took over from the tanks, and the machines rallied west of Marcoing to await the arrival of the cavalry destined to take up the pursuit.

Further to the left again, the company of "H" Battalion reached Bois-de-Neuf, and after it had expelled the enemy, the tank officer concerned handed the village over to the infantry following him. But he insisted on receiving a formal receipt for it.

On the extreme left of the battle-area, the 62nd and 36th Divisions, led by

[1] Fuller, *Memoirs of an Unconventional Soldier*, pp. 206–7.

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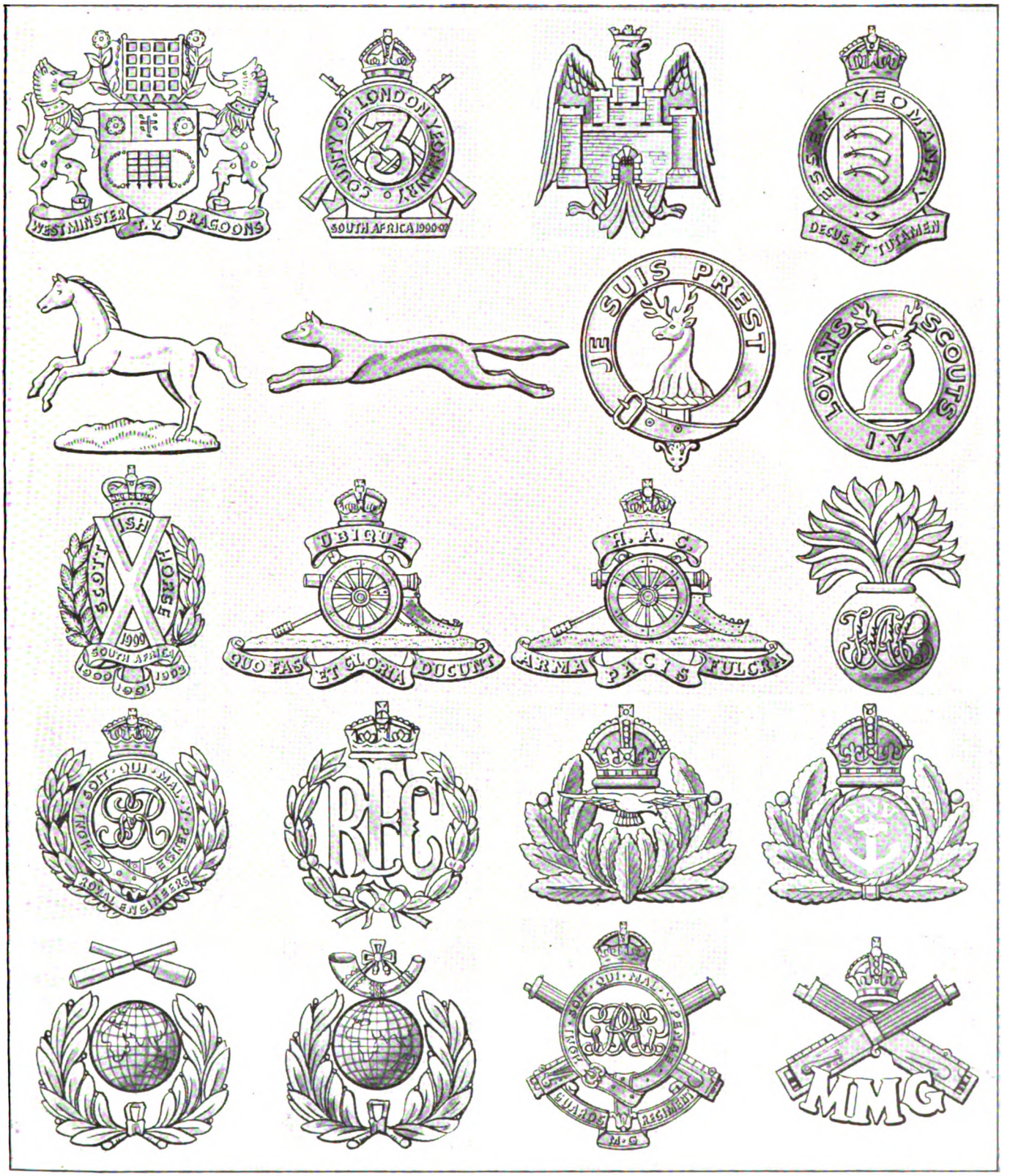

Specially drawn.

BADGES—FIFTH SELECTION

In the customary order—that is to say, from the top left-hand corner, in horizontal rows—the badges represent: 1—Westminster Dragoons (2nd County of London Yeomanry). 2—Sharpshooters (3rd County of London Yeomanry). 3—Bedfordshire Yeomanry. 4—Essex Yeomanry. 5—Northampton Yeomanry. 6—East Riding of Yorkshire Yeomanry. 7—Lovats Scouts (bonnet badge). 8—Lovats Scouts (cap badge). 9—Scottish Horse. 10—Royal Artillery. 11—The Honourable Artillery Company (Artillery). 12—The Honourable Artillery Company (Infantry). 13—Royal Engineers. 14—Royal Flying Corps. 15—Royal Naval Air Service. 16—Royal Naval Division (Lieutenant). 17.—Royal Marine Artillery. 18—Royal Marine Light Infantry. 19—Guards Machine Gun Regiment. 20—Motor Machine Gun Service.

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tanks of " G " Battalion, reached Graincourt and the line of the Bapaume—Cambrai road. The tanks crossed this, and small infantry parties followed them into Anneux and Mœuvres. The men were, however, exhausted after a rapid and victorious advance of four miles, and were withdrawn soon after the tanks had rallied.

So far the programme of attack had been fulfilled almost to the letter, and up to time. But the favourable opportunity for cavalry action thus offered was not seized. The cavalry had been held too far back, and had been told not to begin its advance until orders were received from Cavalry Corps headquarters. By the time the news that the infantry and tanks had broken through and opened the way for the horsemen had reached the Corps commander, and his orders had reached the divisions, the fleeting chance had passed, and the road was barred again.

One squadron of the Canadian Fort Garry Horse got across the Scheldt Canal, rode right into the midst of the fleeing Germans, and returned next morning with a good bag of prisoners. But none followed them. The cavalry had had its chance, but had failed to take it.

General Elles, commanding the Tank Corps, created history by leading his command into battle in person, in the tank " Hilda."

Though in general the German resistance was slight, in places the foe made an admirable defence: " At Lateau Wood there was a thrilling fight between a 5·9 howitzer and a tank. As the tank came round the corner it suddenly encountered the gun, which immediately fired at what was point-blank range. The shell struck the right-hand sponson with terrific force, shattering it and blowing most of it away. For a moment the tank paused, reeling under this mighty blow; but luckily the engine was still intact, and the driver, without hesitation, drove straight at the gun. Before the gunners had time to reload, the tank was on top of them." [1]

A Personal Exploit

Gallant deeds on the part of the Tank Corps personnel were many. Perhaps the most noteworthy was that performed by Captain Wain, of " A " Battalion, near Marcoing: " Captain Wain had gone into action in the tank of one of his lieutenants. When nearing the Hindenburg Support Line, he spotted an enemy strong-point which was holding up the advance of our infantry, and made straight for it. When almost on top of it, a shell hit the tank and knocked it out completely. After the smoke and fumes had cleared away, Captain Wain found that of the whole crew only one other man was alive, and was in a terrible condition.

" Though seriously wounded himself, Captain Wain crawled to the sponson door and looked out. The infantry was still held up.

" ' I'll get them yet,' he murmured to himself, grabbed a Lewis gun, and clambered out. Clenching his teeth, he pulled himself together by a tremendous effort, dashed from behind the tank, and rushed straight at the strong-point, firing away as he ran. The sight of this blood-bespattered apparition charging down on them was too much for the garrison: they wavered and broke.

[1] *Tank Warfare*, pp. 143–4.

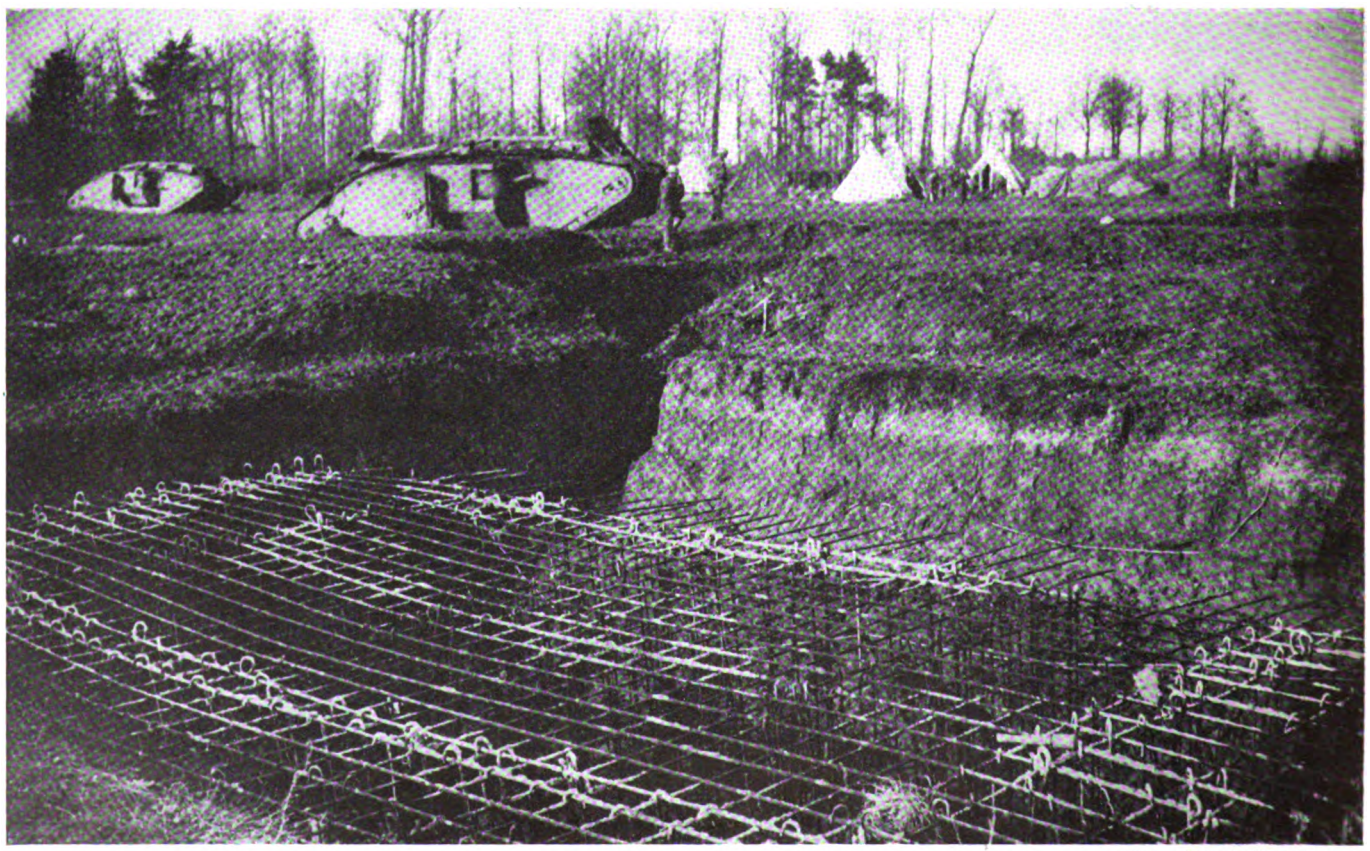

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT FLESQUIÈRES

Flesquières was one of the villages which figured most prominently in the Battle of Cambrai, chiefly owing to its situation in the midst of a small salient. It was captured by the British on November 20th, 1917, and this photograph was taken three days later. In the background are men and machines belonging to the 1st Tank Brigade, 51st Division; the vast umbrella-stand in the foreground is part of an unfinished German defence-work.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

FROM THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH

This photograph was taken on the opening day of the Battle of Cambrai—November 20th, 1917—near the village of Trescault, and shows German prisoners at work outside an advanced dressing-station. The latter is situated, for safety, in a dug-out well underground, and the prisoners are engaged in hauling up a stretcher-case by windlass. The scene is in the area of the 51st Division.

"The next moment Captain Wain was on top of them, firing furiously. Half of the garrison surrendered, the others fell back; but he had not yet completed his task. Although his strength was fast ebbing, he still had a few minutes to live. He picked up a rifle, and fired at the retiring enemy until he himself was hit in the head by a bullet.

"The infantry had now come forward, and the stretcher-bearers hastened to his aid. There was no hope for him—his life-blood was streaming from his wounds—but he refused to be bound up. His iron will kept him at his task, and he continued to assist in the clearing of the strong-point. When his duty was done, and the last German had been killed or had fled, he collapsed and was carried gently away to die.

"For this superhuman display of courage and resolution he was awarded the V.C. In the words of the official report, 'it was due to this most gallant act by this officer that the infantry was able to advance.'"[1]

A Gruesome Incident

Some of the tank crews had miraculous escapes. One tank was pierced in the front by a shell which struck off the driver's head, flung it on the knees of the officer sitting beside him, knocked out the two gunners in the right-hand sponson, and then went clean through the back without bursting.

Whilst attacking nests of machine guns near Flesquières, tank "Edward II," commanded by Lieutenant Bion, received a direct hit from a German field howitzer, which put it out of action. The tank commander gave the order to "abandon ship." The sponson door, on the side away from the enemy, was jammed tight, and to emerge by the other door meant being exposed to heavy machine-gun fire. Private Richardson, however, did not hesitate. Seizing his Lewis gun, he courageously jumped out of the door, and, flopping to the ground amid a hailstorm of bullets, got his gun into action, while the remainder of the crew clambered out and found refuge in a communication trench.

Lieutenant Bion then reopened fire with his Lewis gun from this trench, where his little garrison was strengthened, not long after, by the arrival of 10 men of the 5th Gordons. One enemy machine gun, hidden in a position, annoyed him so persistently that Bion crawled out of the trench with his Lewis gun, climbed up to the top of the tank and, sheltering behind the huge fascine, blazed away until the nuisance had abated.

Seeing that there was only a handful of troops in the trench, the Germans

[1] *Tank Warfare.*

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE

An artillery observation-officer—out-of-range, it is to be hoped, of the enemy in the line—reconnoitring hostile positions from the top of a ruined wall in Havrincourt, November 20th, 1917. This village had been captured by the 62nd (West Riding) Division earlier in the day. The walls here seen were almost the only ones standing.

emerged from the village and attacked the position with about 200 men; but Bion's gun, firing in rapid bursts, soon nipped this attempt in the bud. Unfortunately the encounter exhausted all his ammunition, and if another attack were to take place, his tiny garrison would be overwhelmed. But Lieutenant Bion was a man of resource. He searched along the trench, and found a German machine gun with ammunition. This gun he switched round and kept the Boche at bay until, a few hours later, welcome reinforcements arrived in the shape of a company of Seaforth Highlanders.

While discussing the position with Bion, the company commander was shot through the head. Once more Lieutenant Bion stepped into the breach by taking command of the company, and remained in charge until another lieutenant—of the Seaforths—arrived.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GOING FORWARD

Another scene from the opening day of the great Cambrai offensive. Men of the 51st Division, in single file, cross a deep German communication-trench while going forward to the attack near Ribécourt. The walls of the trench show clearly the solid chalk beneath a thin layer of top-soil.

Incident at Havrincourt

An incident of a similar kind happened to a tank at Havrincourt. It had just captured two strongly-held shell craters, when it caught fire. At the same moment about 100 Germans appeared all round it. To escape the flames two of the crew jumped out of a door. They were shot down immediately. The remainder clambered out of the door on to the other side into a shell-hole, where bombs were thrown at them, one man being killed, the others wounded.

Meanwhile the tank commander, Lieutenant McElroy, had remained in the tank, fighting the flames, and had managed to subdue them with the fire-extinguishers. Then, in spite of the fumes, he opened fire with his Lewis gun and killed many of the enemy.

He soon noticed that they were creeping towards the shell-hole where the four wounded survivors lay hidden. They had almost surrounded it when he opened a loop-hole, and, firing rapidly with his revolver, shot eight of them dead.

Infuriated, the Germans tried to capture the tank by rushes, but he held them at bay single-handed for over an hour, when our infantry arrived.

In another case of this sort the enemy were outwitted in an unusual manner: "At the end of this day, when darkness came, another tank was surrounded by a large number of the enemy. They swarmed over the top of the machine, tried to throw bombs down the exhaust pipe, fired through every crevice and slit they could discover, and, worming their way against the side of the tank, pulled down the machine guns.

"In the darkness the tank crew was blind and helpless. They could not fire their guns, and could see nothing through the chinks and loopholes. They dare not switch on any lights for fear of revealing themselves too clearly to the men outside, or open a flap lest a bomb should be thrown in. They could hear the scraping of many feet on the roof. It was a nightmare.

Crushing Men to Pulp

"Suddenly the officer had an inspiration. He spoke to the driver, who

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leant back and passed the word down to the right-hand gearsman, ' Get her in neutral.' Quickly the gear was in place, and then, pulling hard on the hand-brake, the officer swung the tank round and round. There were terrible shrieks as the swinging machine swept off the raiders like flies, to be crushed under the merciless tracks, and the tank moved on." [1]

No praise can be too high for the magnificent spirit shown by the men of the Tank Corps on this their day of glory: " Even the non-fighting ranks were imbued with this invincible spirit. Lieutenant Parsons, a workshop officer, followed up his company on foot in order to be able to adjust any mechanical breakdown without delay. Just ahead of him a tank caught fire. Four of the crew were burnt and overcome by fumes. The tank commander and driver were courageously fighting the flames. Parsons raced up, jumped on board, and with his assistance the fire was subdued.

" With four men out of action the tank commander was in a quandary. But once again Parsons came to the rescue, saying: ' If you want to go on, I'll act as gearsman for you.'

" The offer was accepted, and the tank went forward. Shortly afterwards it ran across the line of fire of a battery of artillery, and with startling suddenness it was hit no less than three times. The interior became a shambles; every man was killed or wounded except the driver and the ' extra hand.'

" The tank now being at a complete standstill, Lieutenant Parsons was in his element. His engineering instinct came to the fore, and eagerly he worked away until he managed to start up the engine once more. Then, assisted by the driver, he succeeded in bringing the tank, with its cargo of dead and wounded, back to the rallying-point." [2]

Courage Supreme

Perhaps one of the finest examples of these deeds was displayed by Private T. Smith of " E " Battalion: " When in action at Mœuvres he was wounded by bullet splash inside the tank, but remained at his post, steadily firing his gun. Half-an-hour later that dreaded thing happened which every tank man fears—a direct hit. He was wounded again, this time severely. The tank caught fire and the crew had to get out quickly. They were only thirty yards from the enemy's trenches; the ground was as flat as a pancake; if they had attempted to go back there would only have been one end—certain death for them all.

" Luckily there was a small shell-hole near at hand, into which they all dropped. They could not see the enemy, although they could hear him, but he saw them clearly and opened a heavy fire on that unsheltered spot. They squeezed themselves flat on the ground, but streams of bullets searched them out. In a short time two of the crew were killed, and three more wounded. The others kept absolutely still, pre-

[1] *Tank Warfare*, p. 159.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 152.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BATTLE TRAFFIC

A photograph taken on November 22nd, 1917, showing some of the ground captured in the attack of two days previously. The scene is again laid near Ribécourt, and the picture gives a good idea of the assortment of battle traffic which was crowding the muddy roads in the wake of our advancing infantry. Note the lines for a light railway on the left.

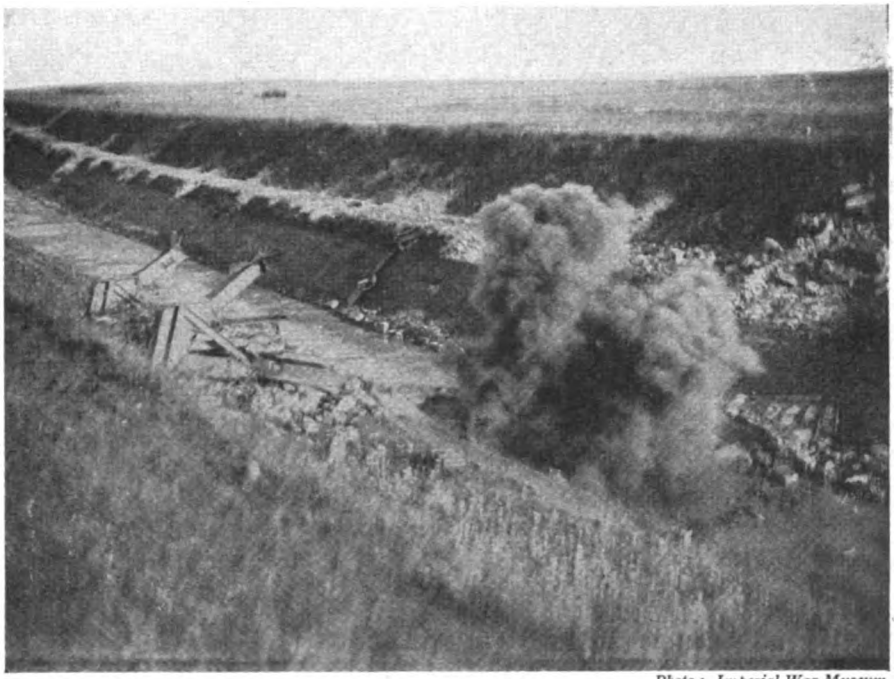

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE END OF A BRIDGE

The camera has here caught the actual explosion-scene at the blowing-up, by the R.E., of the remains of a bridge over the Canal du Nord near Mœuvres, November 28th, 1917. Mœuvres was attacked at the outset of the Cambrai battle by the 36th (Ulster) Division, but resisted all assaults.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TROPHY IN THE SNOW

Chilly German soldiers walk up the village street of Hébuterne, passing on their way a captured British tank. This small but moderately important place is situated just to the south of Gommecourt, and something over a dozen kilometres due north of Albert. On the eve of the first Somme battle, 1916, the southern limit of the Third Army ran through here, the 56th Division occupying the village.

A MULTITUDE OF POLES

From Hébuterne on July 1st, 1916, the Third Army's attack upon the Leipzig and Schwaben Redoubts was launched. Terrific machine-gun fire, inflicting heavy casualties, entirely broke up the assault; and although a footing was gained in the Leipzig Redoubt, the strong-point was not completely won until August 18th. The Schwaben Redoubt held out until the 28th September.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LOOKING DOWN FROM HÉBUTERNE CHURCH

Another war-time view of the ruined village. The 56th and 48th Divisions were closest to this place on the eve of the 1916 push. Although Hébuterne was in British (and previously French) hands from 1915 until the Armistice, the Germans held the eastern outskirts of the village until February, 1917, and again during the summer of 1918. After the War, the place was "adopted" by Evesham.

FROM THE CHURCH TO-DAY

Nowadays there are four British cemeteries here, one of which lies on the site of, and takes its name from, Owl Trench. This trench was raided on July 15th, 1918, by the 4th New Zealand Rifle Brigade, and was cleared five days later by the 1st Auckland Regt. Its 53 U.K. graves, however, are those of 31st Division troops who fell in an attack on the German rearguard, February 27th, 1917.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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tending to be dead, and presently the Germans ceased firing; they thought they had wiped out the whole of the tank crew.

"Then began the long agony of Private Smith. He was very badly wounded and suffering extreme pain, but he clenched his teeth, dug his nails into his hands and uttered not a sound. He knew that the enemy, 20 yards away, would be able to hear the least groan, and that once German suspicions were aroused another storm of deadly bullets would sweep down on them. His two wounds had given him so much pain that he no longer cared whether he lived or died, but he remembered his comrades; so he fought with his pain, put his hand over his mouth and kept silent.

"For five hours his trial continued, five hours of martyrdom, in which that noble spirit stifled the cries of the tortured flesh. Every long second, every weary minute, seemed an endless battle with the forces of intolerable pain. Sweat rolled from his brow, he almost bit his arm in the frenzy of his efforts, but no sound escaped his lips.

A Hero's Epitaph

"His sacrifice availed. He saved his comrades' lives. When darkness came at last, the officer crawled back and obtained assistance from the infantry, who carried in the wounded men. Private Smith was free to groan at last, free to writhe and twist as the pain racked his poor body, but he was too weary now, too feeble even to utter a sound, and soon afterwards, without stir or murmur, the brave spirit quitted that mangled body. In his award of a Military Medal are these words, which should have been written in letters of gold: 'His conduct throughout showed that he had more consideration for the safety of his crew than for his own personal suffering.' What epitaph could be finer?"[1]

Two Victoria Crosses were won by the 29th Division in the fighting near the Scheldt Canal. While endeavouring to cross it at Marcoing, the leading company of the 1st Border Regt. was held up by heavy fire from a well-posted machine gun.

Sergeant C. E. Spackman, though practically no cover at all was available, went through the fire to attack the gun. Working round by short rushes and by crawling, he shot down all the members of the gun-crew except one, and then, rising to his feet, he dashed at the last survivor with lowered bayonet, so that the German bolted, leaving the gun in Spackman's hands and the way clear for the Borders to advance.

1 *Tank Warfare*, pp. 161–2.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE CHURCHYARD AT ASSEVILLERS

And incidentally the church as well, represented by the pile of beams in the centre. This photograph of havoc and dejection was taken on July 11th, 1917, during a "quiet" period on the Somme. The position of the village is some 10 km. south-west of Péronne, and 3 km. north of the Amiens—St. Quentin road at Estrées-Deniécourt. At the commencement of the First Battle of the Somme, Assevillers was in the German second line, but was almost reached by the French I Colonial Corps on July 1st (1916), and was captured by that corps on July 3rd.

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A short distance away, to the east of Masnières, another V.C. was won by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Sherwood Kelly, then commanding the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. His men were attempting to cross a lock bridge over the canal, but were held up by an enemy machine gun. Colonel Kelly, despite the enemy fire, got up and ran to a passing tank, which he directed to endeavour to subdue the hostile weapon; and, thus assisted, he led his men in person across the lock and stormed the position.

V.C. for a Colonel

Later on his leading company was held up when trying to cross a belt of hostile wire. The Colonel seized a Lewis gun, forced his way through the obstacle, got the gun into position on the far side, and subdued the enemy so that the men were able to follow him through without serious loss. His final exploit on this day was to lead a charge against a strong party of Germans in some gun pits, and capture or kill them all. His coolness and nonchalance had been the inspiration of his whole battalion. The V.C. awarded him was the twenty-second won by the 29th Division during the War.

Though the 51st Division had been the least fortunate of any on this battle day, they had been in no way behind the rest in courage and individual gallantry. A V.C. was well earned by Lance-Corporal R. MacBeath, of the 5th Seaforth Highlanders:

"On arrival at the railway, 'A' Company, 5th Seaforth Highlanders, found that the situation at Ribécourt was obscure, hostile machine guns still being active there. Lance-Corporal R. MacBeath was therefore sent out with a patrol to report on the situation. Having proceeded 150 yards from his company, MacBeath discovered the first machine gun, and killed the gunner with his revolver. A tank then arrived and drove the teams of some of the other machine guns down a deep dug-out.

"MacBeath bounded down the dug-out steps after them, killed a German who resisted him on the staircase, and drove the remainder—three officers and 30 other ranks—out of the dug-out by another exit. Sending these men to the rear as prisoners, he again entered the dug-out and thoroughly searched it, accounting for two more Germans. In all, five machine guns were found mounted round the dug-out, which proved to be a battalion headquarters."[1]

[1] *History of the 51st Division*, p. 242.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

IN THE LAP OF PLENTY

Agricultural machinery nowadays lies "parked" almost against the walls of this Somme church. In the spring of 1918, Assevillers was well behind the British lines until March 25th, when the withdrawal of the XIX Corps from the bank of the Somme opposite Péronne to a line through Bray-sur-Somme—Herbécourt—Chaulnes left the village to be occupied by the enemy. It was retaken in the closing week of August, 1918.

French Civilians Freed

One quite novel effect of the victory was that the troops broke through to places still occupied by French civilians, whom the Germans had not thought it necessary to send away, so little had they anticipated our arrival thus far within their lines. An eye-witness standing on the Hindenburg Line describes the thrill he got when a number of these men and women, overjoyed at their release from three years of captivity with the Germans, marched down the road toward him singing the *Marseillaise*, while down in the trenches our men, only mildly interested, were squatting round camp fires, smoking German cigars, and discussing whether Aston Villa or Tottenham Hotspur would win the next Cup Final.

The lock-keeper at the lock east of Masnières afterwards told our officers that when the bombardment began he had expected nothing unusual, but soon panic had begun to show itself among the German troops in the neighbourhood; musketry and machine-gun fire began and drew ever nearer, and soon the noise of approaching tanks was added to it.

The excitement among the population grew intense; and when the Germans,

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN THE WAKE OF A TANK

A good idea of the devastation wrought by the mere passage of a tank—quite apart from its fire—is afforded by this photograph of tank-tracks near Trescault during December, 1917. From the path here blazoned across the bare earth it is easy to imagine the annihilating effect of the machine upon a screen of barbed wire.

who were billeted in the lock-house, took up their kits and disappeared, not toward the front, but toward the rear, and joined the enemy already streaming away in numbers across the fields in the direction of Cambrai, the joyous villagers really began to believe that rescue was at hand. Then at last our men came into view over the southern skyline, and their enthusiasm was unbounded. They burst into tears of joy, and embraced the first of our troops who came among them.

The first day of the battle had thus ended in a glorious and unprecedented success, and the slight setback suffered by the 51st Division, and the inability of the cavalry to play the rôle allotted to it, regrettable as these were, seemed matters of only minor importance. And indeed, had fresh troops and fresh tanks been at hand in adequate numbers to continue what had been so amazingly and admirably begun, they would have been of minor importance in very truth.

Germans Reinforced

But no tanks had been kept back, and it was not the British who had the fresh troops, but the enemy; for, as misfortune would have it, the *107th Division*, just arrived from Russia, was in the act of detraining at Cambrai as the battle began. Rushed to the front, it was able to get into position in time to stem the further advance of our battle-wearied troops and tanks, and to give the surprised German commanders the respite they needed to retrieve the half-lost battle.

General Byng, however, still hoped to be able, on November 21st, to open up a breach in the German line for the cavalry to go through. The III Corps was ordered to occupy Crèvecœur and the rest of the old German third line thence to Masnières, while the IX Corps was to secure Flesquières, and to push on to Bourlon village and wood, and also capture the bridges over the Canal-du-Nord about Mœuvres.

The only tanks available, then, to support the attack were the survivors of the machines which had already fought the day before, all the crews of which were tired and depleted. The infantry, which was equally tired, and in many cases thinned, had to attack alone; and the results of the day were disappointing.

The 20th Division's attempt to capture Crèvecœur miscarried. The 12 tanks allotted to assist it ran out of petrol in the early stages, and the 11th K.R.R.C., which led the advance, was soon checked by enemy fire from the east bank of the Scheldt Canal. The 29th Division, on the left, was also to be assisted by tanks, to the number of 16. But the Germans in its front were strongly entrenched; half of our machines were put out of action almost at once, and the two battalions of the 87th Brigade which carried out the advance, after losing practically all their officers, did not proceed much beyond their starting-line.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UPHILL WORK

Roaring and belching forth smoke like a dragon, a British tank, "F.4," forces its way up a slippery rise at Wailly, October, 1917. This village, of which several illustrations have already appeared, is not in the Cambrai area, but is intimately concerned with the battle, in that here the Tank Driving School had been set up, at which the 400 tanks employed were gathered and rehearsed.

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86th Brigade at Noyelles

Farther to the west, however, we had consolidated ourselves firmly, and three German counter-attacks against Noyelles were gallantly beaten off, though the enemy broke into the village streets, and had to be ejected with the bayonet. At the end of the day, the 86th Brigade was carrying on the fight entirely with captured German arms and ammunition. On this part of the front the battle now died down, and the main scene of action shifted further to the west, where the IV Corps was fighting for the area between Cambrai and the Canal-du-Nord.

Early on the morning of the 21st, patrols of the 51st Division found Flesquières free of the enemy, and the 154th Brigade was ordered to go forward by way of Cantaing to Fontaine-Notre Dame. On its left the 62nd Division from Graincourt was to advance on Bourlon wood and village and seize that commanding height, while the 36th Division, on the left again, was to push ahead astride the Canal-du-Nord.

The Highlanders' advance at first met with little resistance. The Germans had a fortified line running north-westwards from Cantaing to Anneux and Mœuvres, but the 51st Division entered Cantaing in the wake of the tanks, and the Queen's Bays of the 1st Cavalry Division cleared the village after some street fighting. The Bays then established touch with the 29th Division on the right.

The entrenchments further west held up the attack for some time, but at length the Germans were out-flanked by the advance of the 62nd Division and the timely co-operation of some tanks, and gave up the struggle. Our men carried the entrenched line and pushed on to Fontaine, which fell into our hands practically without resistance. Here they consolidated after an excellent day's work.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FOLLOW-MY-LEADER

A photograph of the 11th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers moving in single file along a captured German communication-trench during the Battle of Cambrai. The début of the great attack could hardly have been more auspicious, and in the first successful rush the infantry following up the tanks got within 5 miles of Cambrai itself.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRINGING IN THE SPOILS

One of the many trophies which fell to the tanks as the astonished and terrified Germans fled from before their advance: a captured 5·9-inch naval gun being brought in by a tank of "C" Battalion on November 29th, 1917. The scene is the wood which lies east of Ribécourt on the Marcoing road. Marcoing village, like Ribécourt, had been captured by the British on November 20th.

The 62nd Division, too, did well. The 186th Brigade advanced from Graincourt shortly after 10 o'clock, and had some grim fighting in the streets of Anneux and to westward of it. The village was captured, but the German entrenched line beyond it defied all our efforts. The enemy's resistance was becoming stiffer every hour; and the 36th Division along the Canal-du-Nord was also held up on the outskirts of Mœuvres.

End of the Time-limit

Such was the position at nightfall on the 21st. The 48 hours which Sir Douglas Haig had allowed General Byng for the battle had elapsed. The question was, should it be broken off, or should a further effort be made? Unless and until the Bourlon position was captured, not only could we get no further, but it would be impossible for us to maintain the ground we had already gained.

The III Corps on the right was definitely held up, but a continuance of the IV Corps' attack on the left seemed to have prospects of success, and it was

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GLENCORSE WOOD

A scene looking toward Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse, both north of the Menin Road, and just east of the angle where the road turns from nearly east to nearly south-east. The date of the photograph is September 26th, 1917, when the Germans were counter-attacking at the beginning of the Battle of Polygon Wood (September 26th—October 3rd). The 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions had captured Glencorse Wood, together with Nonne Boschen at the northern end of it, on the morning of September 20th (Battle of Menin Road Ridge).

decided to renew the offensive on this wing. The 56th Division was brought into line on the left of the 36th, and the two together were ordered to continue the advance on the 22nd and capture Mœuvres and Inchy. The 51st and 62nd Divisions, however, were for the moment too exhausted for a further effort, and were ordered to consolidate their ground where they stood. The 40th Division and the Guards Division were ordered up to relieve them, with a view to continuing the attack as soon as possible.

The respite thus granted to the enemy was not wasted by him. Five new German divisions began to arrive in the Cambrai area on the 21st and 22nd, and a heavy counter-offensive was delivered against the whole front of the 51st and 62nd Divisions. The 62nd Division held its ground manfully about Anneux, and repulsed the enemy with heavy loss; but the 51st, which really had to bear the brunt of the onslaught, was thrust out of Fontaine after a determined resistance.

The 4th Seaforth Highlanders, who were holding the village, clung on until they were practically surrounded, and, even when compelled to retire, managed to check the further advance of the Germans and render it impossible for them to emerge into the open country to the south. Away on the left flank, the 36th and 56th Divisions, by dint of bombing attacks, made a certain amount of progress, reached the outskirts of Mœuvres, and secured Tadpole Copse to the west of it.

Fontaine Threatened

The 40th Division took over from the 62nd round Anneux on the night of the 22nd, and an attack was ordered for the following morning. The 51st Division's objective was to be Fontaine, and that of the 40th Bourlon Wood and village. The 36th and 56th Divisions were also to co-operate on either side of the Canal-du-Nord. The 51st Division's attack was supported by 12 tanks drawn from various units of the 2nd Tank Brigade. These had come across from the III Corps, and had not time to concert operations with the infantry.

Fontaine was held by a fresh German division, the *119th*, which had fortified the place strongly for defence, and had been instructed to let the tanks go through and to devote its main attention to the infantry following them. The tired troops of the 51st Division were unable to keep up with the tanks, and though these broke into the village and cruised about the streets for a long time, they eventually had to return.

During this fighting one tank officer among many performed a peculiarly gallant exploit: "2nd-Lieutenant A. Mustard advanced against Fontaine with the remainder of his section. On reaching the outskirts of the village his tank experienced engine trouble and stopped. The machine was surrounded

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by the enemy, who bombed it and fired at point-blank range through the gun mountings and loop-holes, wounding three gunners. Mustard was called upon by the enemy to surrender, but, ordering his gunners to keep up Lewis-gun fire, he himself worked at the engine, and after three-quarters of an hour succeeded in starting it, and finally brought his tank out of action.

"During the whole of this period the infantry were held up by machine-gun fire outside Fontaine, and were therefore not in a position to assist the tank while it was stationary in the village."

Despite the most heroic efforts, therefore, Fontaine at the end of the day was still firmly in German hands.

Farther to the west, the 40th Division carried out a magnificent attack against Bourlon village and wood. The wood covered some 600 acres, and was a mass of thickly growing oak and ash, with dense brushwood underfoot. It crowned the top of a high hill commanding all the country round, and had been turned by the enemy into a veritable strong-point. But the 40th Division, though it was unaccustomed to working with tanks, and the machines co-operating with it were worn out and their crews tired, was not to be resisted. The infantry stormed the wood in the face of heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, which caused severe casualties, and forced their way into the village beyond.

Fierce street fighting ensued, but the Germans maintained their foothold in the northern half of the village, and late in the evening a counter-attack thrust our men back to the edge of the wood, where they held on. The advance, brilliantly successful in its first stages, lost cohesion later, and the casualties among the tanks and the infantry were alike heavy. Farther to the left, in the 36th and 56th Division sectors, little progress was made. That night the exhausted 51st Division was relieved by the Guards.

More About Bourlon

On November 24th, apart from a smart and successful local operation by the 12th Division on the right of the III Corps, which established our line on the high ground above Banteux, west of the Scheldt Canal, the main scene of the fighting was again the Bourlon sector. Throughout the morning of that day German masses surged up against the wood from every side. One attack broke in at the north-east corner; but the 40th Division, assisted by some dismounted cavalry, returned the charge and drove out the enemy.

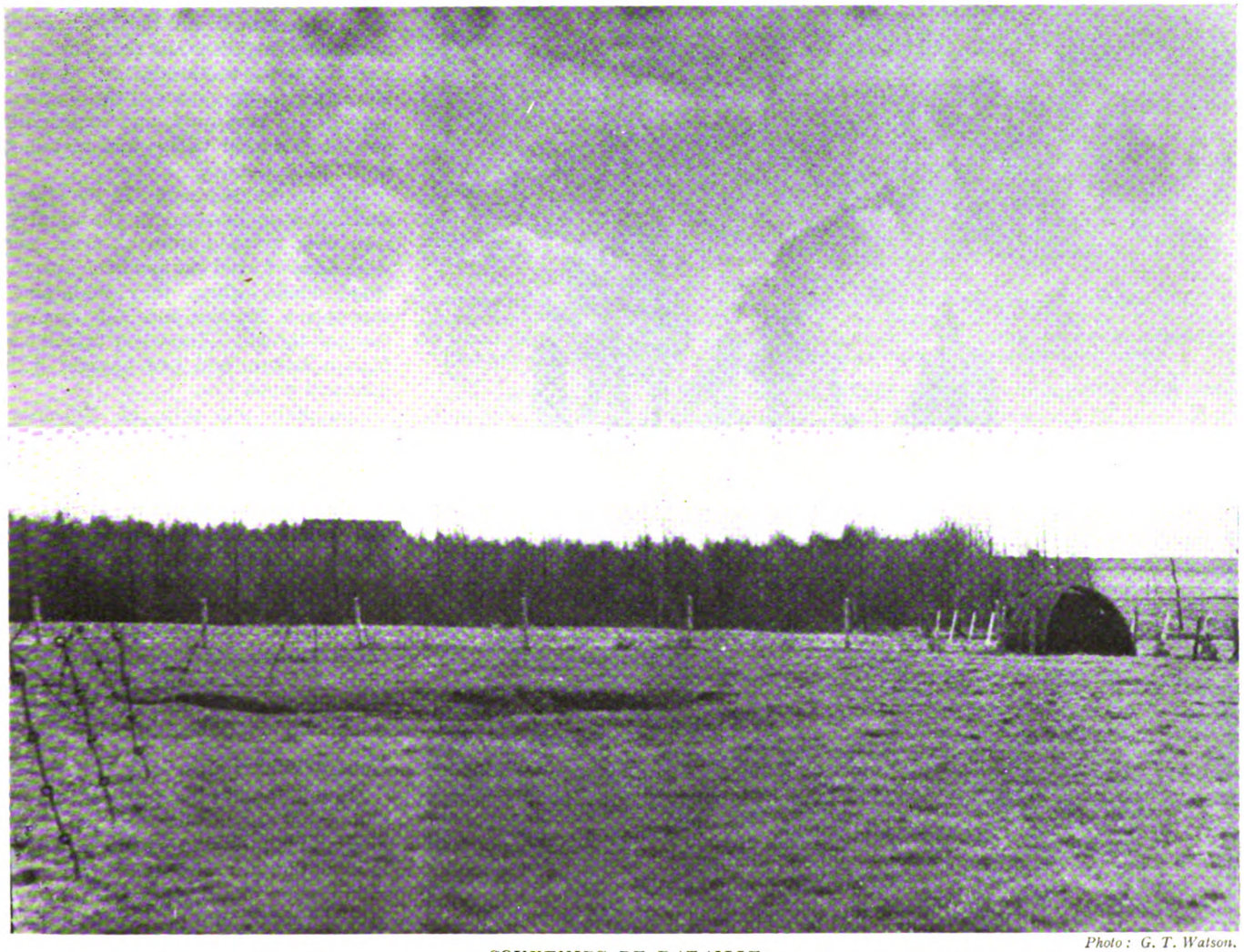

Photo: G. T. Watson.

SOUVENIRS DE BATAILLE

"Elephant iron," war-time barbed wire, a depression in the ground looking suspiciously like a shell-hole—Glencorse Wood and its vicinity might be among the "memorial parks," and it could scarcely preserve more potent reminders of the bad old days. Just outside the range of this picture there is a pill-box, much overgrown, but still a conspicuous object on the fringe of the young trees. Immediately prior to its capture in September, 1917, the wood had seen fierce fighting, and the western edge of it had been captured by the 56th Division on August 16th.

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Then, in the afternoon, the 120th Brigade swept into the smoking ruins of Bourlon village, chased out the defenders, and secured the whole place.

They were not allowed to stay there long. Early the following morning a new German division came into line, fell upon the exhausted troops of our 40th Division, and thrust them, fighting step by step, back into Bourlon Wood. A party of the 13th East Surrey Regiment, cut off in the village, maintained itself in its isolated outpost until it was rescued, two days later.

On the morning of the 26th the battered 62nd Division, after no more than three days' rest, was brought into line again in place of the 40th, and the 36th Division, on its left, was replaced by the 2nd. Sir Douglas Haig met General Byng and his two corps commanders in conference at Havrincourt Château, and it was decided that the battle was to be brought to an end after one more attempt to capture Fontaine and Bourlon, on the morning of the 27th.

Owing to the presence of the handful of East Surreys in Bourlon village, it was impossible for our guns to bombard it in preparation for the attack. The whole operation was hurried and badly prepared. Only verbal orders could be issued, while the necessary redistribution of troops also militated against success. The enemy troops were fresh, and were being reinforced; ours were tired by their previous exertions, while the weather, which had turned bitterly cold, with frequent snow-storms, had taken heavy toll of their remaining strength. Only 12 tanks were available to support the attack, and our artillery was unable to deal effectively with the hostile machine-gun fire which greeted our infantry as soon as it began the advance.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

STILL USEFUL

The tank seen above, though disabled—witness the broken track on the right—comes in very handy as a platform for an observation- and signalling-post. The machine belongs to the 2nd Tank Brigade, 6th Division, and the date is November 23rd, 1917. The scene is once more laid—as was so much of the tank-fighting—in the neighbourhood of Ribécourt.

Guards Suffer Heavily

On the Guards Division front only one brigade was available to attempt the capture of Fontaine, and this had had no previous training in working with the tanks. Our machines were unable to get off for some time, so that the infantry was isolated, and suffered heavily from the start. Nevertheless, it got into and through the village, but was unable to clear it effectively. The Germans counter-attacked from the south, and part of the garrison, which had kept hidden under cover when the tanks went through, emerged from its dug-outs and took our men in the rear. The Guards' gains were slowly wrested from them, and by nightfall they were back where they had started.

The 62nd Division had 20 tanks to help it, and advanced early in the morning while it was still dark. The line from which it took off ran through the middle of Bourlon Wood, and in the thick undergrowth and the darkness the advancing battalions lost their direction, and there was much confused fighting. Nevertheless, they reached the northern outskirts of the wood, and some units got into Bourlon village and remained until late in the day.

But the tanks' progress in the streets was held up by barricades; the infantrymen were assailed from all sides, and were finally forced out and back into the wood again, where they maintained themselves in the face of renewed German thrusts. The whole attack had been a failure, and had brought little gain and much loss.

The 28th and 29th of November passed quietly. The 50th Division took over from the Guards, and the 47th Division from the 62nd. These 48 hours were devoted to strengthening the position and preparing for the counter-offensive which was to be expected from a reinforced enemy. Owing to lack of reserves on the battlefield, the thinned and wearied formations which had fought the offensive battle were left in the line, and adequate steps to strengthen and consolidate our gains were not taken.

Costly but Successful

Up to this point the Battle of Cambrai had been an immense success. Our losses, amounting to 22,000, had been heavy, but we had taken from the enemy over 10,000 prisoners, 142 guns, 350 machine guns, 70 trench mortars, and large quantities of stores. The losses of the Tank Corps, which had borne the brunt of the battle, were not excessively heavy. They amounted to

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under 1,200, including many only slightly wounded men who remained on duty; while of the 476 fighting tanks which went into action on November 20th, over two-thirds, after the necessary repairs had been done, were again available for action before the end of the battle.

The expected German counter-offensive took place on the morning of November 30th. Several fresh divisions had been concentrated for the purpose, and the enemy delivered two heavy blows with the object of driving in both flanks of the large salient now formed by our line in the Cambrai area, and forcing us to a costly withdrawal. His principal effort in the north was gallantly repulsed by the troops holding Bourlon Wood and the front westwards from that point as far as our old line.

The attack against the eastern face of the salient, on the other hand, met with rapid and unexpected success. For some time we were within a hair's breadth of disaster; and although a catastrophe was averted, we were eventually compelled to evacuate much of the ground so brilliantly won in the early stages of the battle. On the morning of November 30th the line of our III Corps, and of the VII Corps on its right, ran along the high ground just west of the Scheldt Canal, from Crèvecœur in the north to Vendhuile in the south; but our positions did not actually overlook the canal, so that the enemy was able to mass in the valley below, and to cross the obstacle unseen.

The 55th Division, on the left of the VII Corps, though it had not fought in the battle, held a very long front, and was thinly extended, with few reserves. The 12th and 20th Divisions, holding the remainder of the line, had fought hard and lost heavily, and had been unable to do much to strengthen their new positions.

Germans Sweep Forward

The main weight of the German attack fell upon the junction between the 55th and 12th Divisions in front of Villers-Guislain. There was a heavy bombardment; a cloud of low-flying aeroplanes came swooping over, machine-gunning our troops as they dived; and then the enemy infantry advanced in long waves one after another in quick succession. Our troops were driven in almost at once, the forward posts were swamped in the tide of attack, and most of them were never seen again.

The German infantry reached our forward battery positions and laid hands on a number of guns. The gunners retreated, taking with them the breech-blocks and the sights. The news of defeat quickly spread into the back areas, and there ensued a general exodus westwards in which there were occasional signs of panic.

By midday, despite the valiant efforts of our reserves to stem the tide, the Germans had occupied Gonnelieu and Villers-Guislain, and their advanced troops were still further to the west, in Gauche Wood and Gouzeaucourt. In this area were situated all the divisional and brigade headquarters of the units holding the eastern half of our salient. Communications to the forward troops were cut or had to be abandoned, the issue of the orders necessary to meet the situation was delayed or interrupted, and in many cases the commanders and staff officers were hard put to it to escape falling into the hands of the victorious enemy.

The German success, however, was by no means complete along the whole front. The right wing of the 55th Division facing Vendhuile held out valiantly, and broke up all the hostile attacks against its front. Parties of the 12th Division held on west of Gonnelieu, Bonavis Ridge, and Lateau Wood, from which they had been driven in the first rush, while the reserve brigade, flung in hurriedly to fill the gap between the 12th and 55th Divisions, also checked the hostile attack when it had penetrated as far as Revelon Farm, east of Heudecourt.

Guards at Gouzeaucourt

Farther to the north, however, a wide gap still yawned about Gouzeaucourt; and the Guards Division, which had only just been withdrawn into reserve, was called on to save the situation. As many of the refitted tanks as could be made available at short notice were urgently summoned to assist. The Guards advanced in magnificent order, thrusting their way through a crowd of men of all units and formations streaming back to the rear.

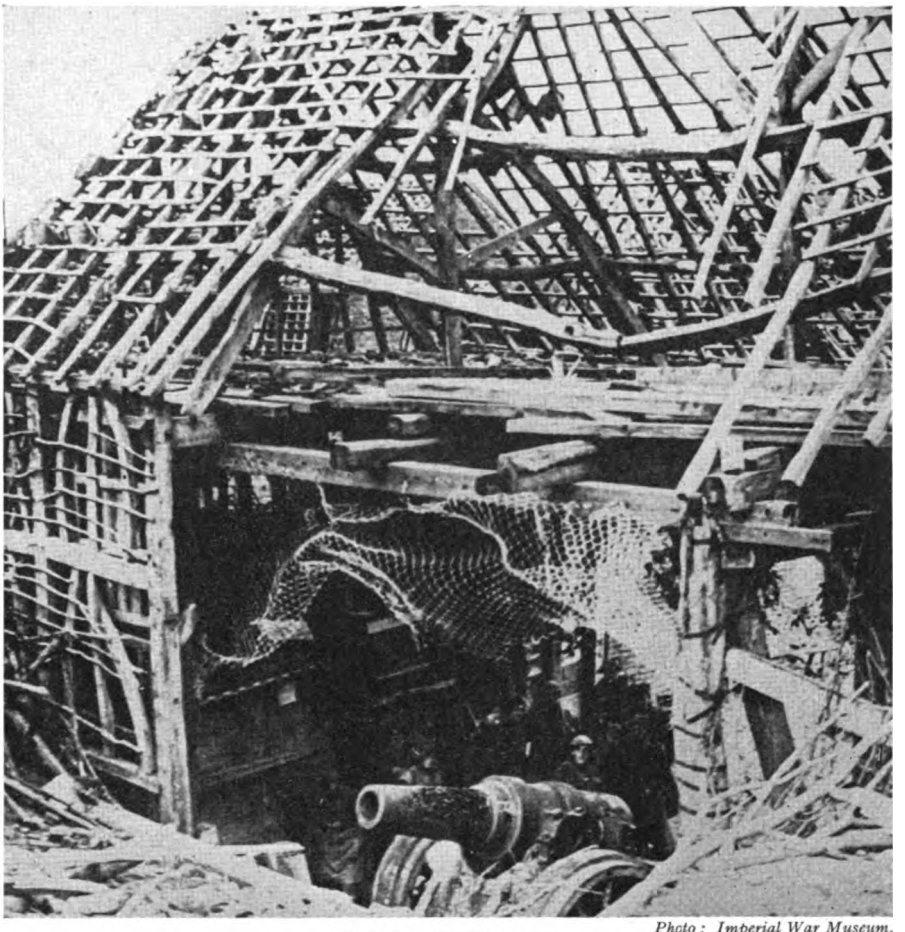

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MENACE FRUSTRATED

A German 8-inch howitzer, captured by the 51st Division at Flesquières, seen in its emplacement in a ruined barn on November 24th, 1917. On this date the main theatre of fighting was the Bourlon sector, the village being captured by the 120th Brigade—only to be lost on the following morning. Flesquières was yet another village taken in the triumphant advance of November 20th.

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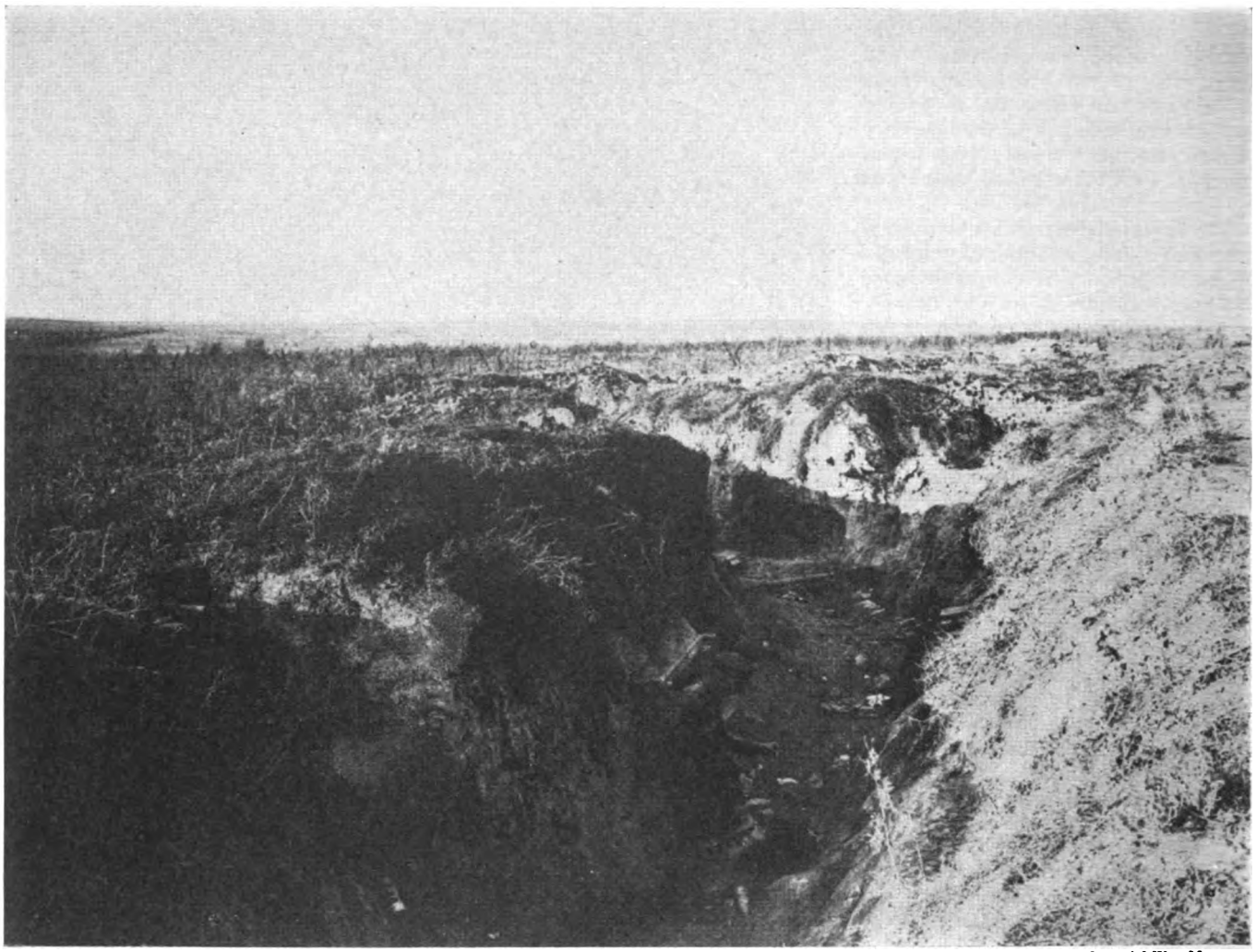

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN THE HINDENBURG SYSTEM

A front-line trench in the Hindenburg Line after its capture by the British. The trench is situated opposite the St. Quentin Canal Tunnel, upon Cologne Ridge, and the date is October 3rd, 1918. On this day the Fourth Army launched a new attack on an 8-mile front, taking Sequehart, Ramicourt, Wiancourt, Le Catelet, and Gouy. Meanwhile the Australians, south-east of Le Catelet, broke through the Beaurevoir—Fonsomme Line.

On arriving at Gouzeaucourt Wood, the 1st Guards Brigade on the right found the village in the occupation of the enemy. Picking up a number of scattered men whose fighting spirit was still intact, it swept into and through Gouzeaucourt, chasing the Germans out before it and up the hill on the far side, and established itself on the line of the railway. The 3rd Guards Brigade, on the left, advancing side by side with the 1st, continued northwards to the western outskirts of Villers-Plouich, which remained in the enemy's hands that night.

The gap had been filled and the extreme peril averted, but the enemy could not be left to stay where he was. Early on the morning of December 1st the Guards were ordered to drive him from Gauche Wood and Gonnelieu, a task which the weak reserves of the 20th Division had attempted unsuccessfully the previous evening. The Guards were more fortunate. A few tanks, which had not been available the previous day, were now at hand to assist them; and the 1st Guards Brigade, advancing south-east from Gouzeaucourt, recaptured Gauche Wood and the high ground to the north of it.

But the attack on Gonnelieu by the 3rd Guards Brigade, though the leading waves broke into the village streets, and a few men even emerged on the far side, proved insufficient to establish the brigade in the village. When matters came to a standstill, however, we held the western outskirts securely. The enemy's attack, after a brilliant opening success on this part of the front, had completely spent itself, and the prompt counter-offensive by the Guards and tanks had robbed him of a large portion of his gains.

In Les Rues Vertes

Meanwhile, farther to the north, where the 29th Division held the line north of the Scheldt Canal at Masnières and Marcoing, an equally serious peril had been equally successfully dealt with. The 86th Brigade on the right was heavily attacked from the north, and at the same time the retreat of the troops of the 20th Division exposed its eastern flank, so that the situation quickly became critical. The enemy stormed into the rear areas of the division, broke into Les Rues Vertes, swept over Welsh Ridge, and advanced towards Marcoing.

In Les Rues Vertes Captain R. Gee, Staff Captain of the 86th Brigade, rushed into the midst of the advancing enemy, and, freely using his revolver and a loaded stick, scattered them. Then he organised the defence of the village behind extemporised barricades of

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chairs and tables, gathered together a handful of men, and bombed the astonished Germans out of the place. Thus the situation here was made safe. The exploit was suitably rewarded with a V.C.

To the north the battalions holding the bridge-head remained firm, but south of Les Rues Vertes the enemy were still coming on apace; and the divisional reserves from Marcoing, without any orders from the divisional staff, whose headquarters farther back had been put out of action by the Germans' advance there, moved eastward to restore the position. The Germans gave way before them, and the front was re-established on a line running south-west from Les Rues Vertes to Welsh Ridge.

As the 29th Division's reserves advanced, they were joined by many parties and individuals who had been fighting in isolation, and who now gladly hurried from all sides to help drive off the enemy.

On Welsh Ridge the divisional artillery, too, had been at close quarters with the foe; many of the batteries had had to fight their guns in the open at point-blank range, and some had been compelled to abandon them. One artillery officer wrote:

Great Targets

"A most thrilling day, and we fought the Hun by ourselves for over an hour and a half after those fellows on our right had come through us and gone back. We had to keep the gap as long as we could for the sake of our division, who fought like tigers. Great targets, masses of Uhlans, etc., finishing up with columns of infantry at from 200 to 40 yards range.

"Then I held on to a trench with the help of a few infantry I could pick up. My headquarters were captured and recaptured, and we finally held it until ammunition ran out. As you can imagine, it was in parts a good show, and in parts not such a good show. I can't say much more, but the Hun main effort, with ten fresh divisions, was stopped, though there were anxious moments in our rear. My servant, groom, doctor, vet, both horses, and others, including the R.S.M., gone west. The batteries fought splendidly, and escaped fairly lightly owing to the way they stuck to it." [1]

[1] *The Story of the 29th Division*, p. 172.

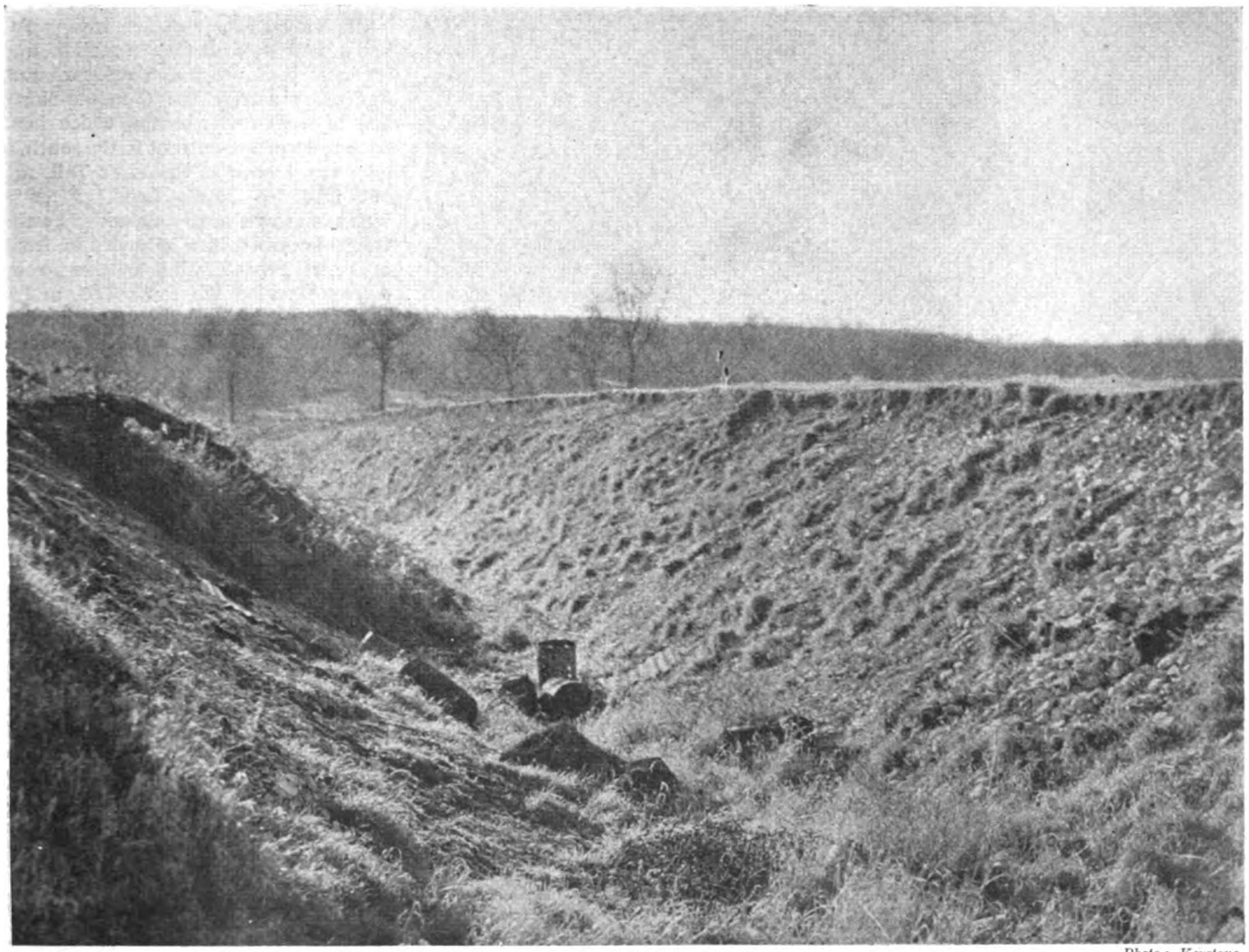

Photo: Keystone.

WHERE THE GERMANS MADE THEIR LAST STAND

There are many traces of the Hindenburg Line still remaining—melancholy reminders of the days when Germany's soldiers here made their last firm stand before falling back and back with ever-increasing speed toward their own frontier. This particular stretch of trench is reminiscent of modern Gallipoli in its lack of alteration, and in the profusion of its relics. Old tins, a brazier, a sheet of corrugated iron, a coil of rusty barbed wire—only the remains of human bodies seem to be wanting; and one may be tolerably sure that these are not deeply hidden.

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On the morning of December 1st, the enemy renewed his attack against the acute and awkward salient held by the 29th Division at Masnières. He was stubbornly resisted everywhere, and though in places he managed to penetrate the village, he was never allowed to remain in it for long. But the division's front was too extended, and its numbers too reduced, to make it worth while continuing to maintain its present position. The troops holding Masnières and Les Rues Vertes were withdrawn to about a quarter of a mile west of the village, where a new line was dug on the night of December 1st. The enemy made no attempt to interfere with the movement, or to attack again here on the morrow, so that on this part of the front, too, the situation was stabilised by the morning of December 2nd.

Meanwhile the main German attack on the north flank of the salient, between Bourlon and Mœuvres, had been repulsed with heavy loss. The wood itself, which was held by the 47th Division, was early on the morning of November 30th drenched with gas shell; and shortly after 10 o'clock the Germans were seen advancing in waves over the crest of the hill to the west.

Photo: Bassano.

GENERAL BYNG

Lord Byng of Vimy and of Thorpe-le-Soken (Essex), who died June 6th, 1935, was one among the many Great War commanders whose early service was seen in Africa. G.O.C. in Egypt until August, 1914, he commanded the 3rd Cavalry Division until May, 1915, the IX Corps, British Mediterranean Force, 1915–16, the XVII Corps during 1916, the Canadian Corps, April, 1916–June, 1917, and finally the Third Army until the end of the War. In this long career his greatest successes were undoubtedly the capture of Vimy Ridge, April 9th, 1917, and his brilliant share in the Cambrai battle of seven months later, for which he was afterwards promoted from lieut.-general to full general.

The Persistent Foe

The Londoners' machine guns in the wood took the enemy in flank, and within a short while they were brought to a standstill, and eventually compelled to retire in disorder. But they were not to be denied. At 2 o'clock they came on again, striking heavily against the division's left near its point of junction with the 2nd Division, and at the same time swarming through the wood against the right brigade. This brigade lost considerably under the bombardment, and had a large number of gas casualties; but it stood firm, and broke up the enemy masses before they could set foot in our trenches.

Except for a short length of trench on its left wing, the 47th Division maintained its lines intact all day; and even this trifling gain of ground was won back from the enemy by a vigorous counter-attack 48 hours later.

The 2nd Division, still more to the west, had a more difficult task in maintaining its line. Its front was an awkward one, for it lay astride the Canal-du-Nord, and in front of its centre, which bent back to form a re-entrant to the south, a long sap, known as the Rat's Tail, ran out into No Man's Land. After a violent barrage, heavy masses of hostile troops swarmed into Mœuvres in front of the left brigade, while another strong column assailed the Rat's Tail, and a third surged up against the right wing of the division, where it linked up with the Londoners.

Almost everywhere the enemy was checked and beaten to the ground by the rifles and machine guns in front of our main line of resistance. In the centre, however, the garrison of the Rat's Tail, which consisted of the 17th Royal Fusiliers, put up an heroic fight. Captain Stone remained with the rear-guard, standing on the parapet, with a telephone in his hand, while shells burst and bullets sang all about him, and sent back information to the rear with the utmost coolness and accuracy. Finally the Germans stormed in upon the dwindling bank of survivors, every one of whom fell; but their gallant resistance had given time for a firm defence to be erected behind them, and this defied all the Germans' attempts to penetrate it.

An Enjoyable Novelty

Further to the left, on the eastern bank of the Canal-du-Nord, our men inflicted heavy losses on the massed hostile formations as they came over the ridge a few hundred yards distant. Their rifles grew so heated from rapid fire that

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From HARGICOURT to BELLICOURT

Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

PANORAMA OF HARGICOURT

Hargicourt has several times figured as a reference in the captions to "Then and Now" pairs, and on this and the following page are four photographs of the village itself. It lies in the Hindenburg Line area, near the St. Quentin Canal Tunnel: its precise location being 14 km. north-west of St. Quentin and 17 k.m. nearly due east of Péronne. During the Battle of Arras, 1917, the Allied attack launched on April 12th in the southern part of the battle-area extended along a 9-mile front from Hargicourt to Metz-en-Couture.

Photo: Keystone

HARGICOURT ACROSS THE FIELDS

The vicinity of Hargicourt next enters the battle annals under the date August 26th, 1917, when an isolated operation drove in the German line half-a-mile on a mile front east of the village. All this fighting, and that which was to follow in 1918, left Hargicourt badly damaged, as the war-time view above (taken on September 20th, 1918), shows without equivocation. There are now two British cemeteries here, containing altogether 334 United Kingdom, 27 Australian, 22 Indian, and 2 German burials.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

ON THE HARGICOURT–BELLICOURT ROAD

In the great German attack of March 21st, 1918, Hargicourt fell at the first assault, having previously been just inside our line. The enemy's attack, preceded by an intense bombardment, began about 9.45 a.m., under cover of a thick mist; and by midday the capture of this village and of Villeret, 1½ km. to the south-east of it, was complete. This photograph, taken on September 30th, 1918, shows the 2nd Australian Tunnelling Company working in concert with American engineers to open up the Hargicourt–Bellicourt road.

Photo: Keystone

CROSSING THE HINDENBURG LINE

Bellicourt is situated 4½ km. due east of Hargicourt, and the road linking them became of immense importance for communication purposes during the Australian–American operations of September 29th–30th, 1918, to which reference has been made in more than one recent caption. Hargicourt itself was retaken by Australian units during the big attack of September 18th. On the fatal 21st March preceding, the sorely-tried 66th Division had been the formation holding this village.

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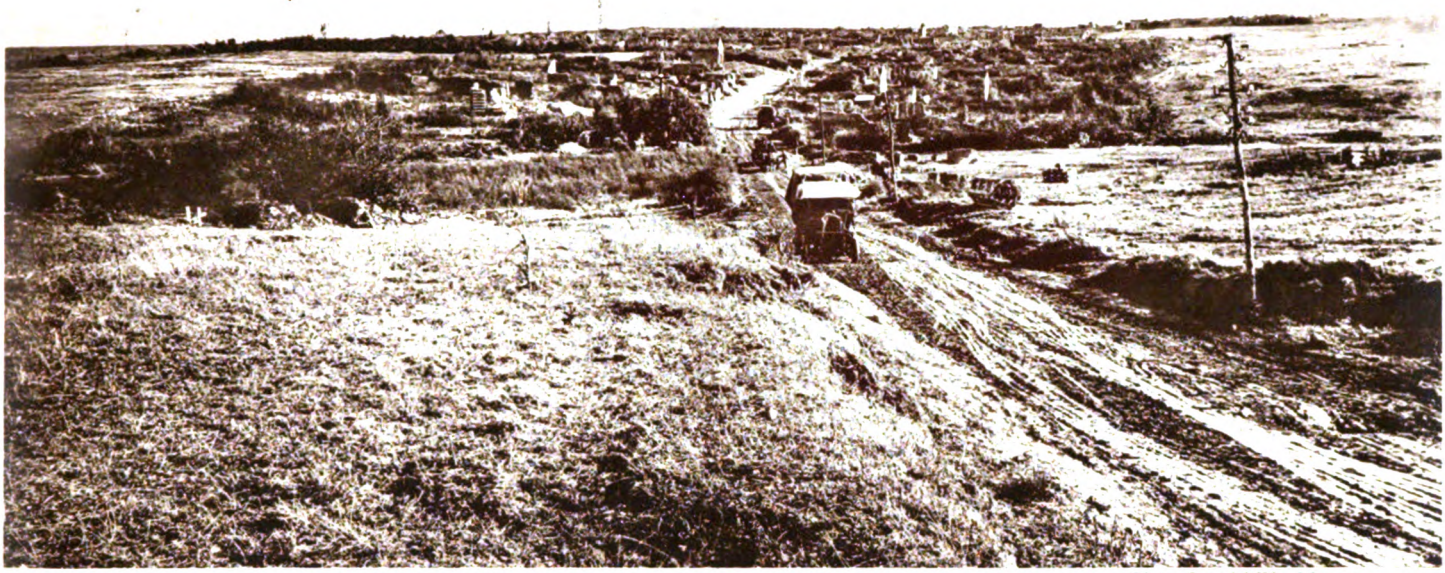

Photo: Imperial War Museum

VILLERET FROM THE NEIGHBOURING HILLSIDE

The position of Villeret having been given on the opposite page, it remains only to add that the road on which the village stands is not the Hargicourt–Bellicourt route, but an insignificant by-way leading south from Hargicourt to Pontru and eventually to Cambrai. Villeret was captured by British troops on April 15th, 1917, and was held until its loss on March 21st, 1918, in the operation which cost us Hargicourt. As it fell with its neighbour, so it recovered with it, and was regained with Hargicourt on September 18th.

Photo: Keystone

LOOKING DOWN ON PEACEFUL VILLERET

Villeret lies in a decided dip, and on March 21st, 1918, it was in the centre of the enemy's advance. After it had fallen, our 21st Division at Epéhy and 24th Division in Le Verguier, respectively on the northern and southern flanks of this particular assault, managed to hold out until nightfall against repeated attacks, and by their resoluteness considerably mitigated the advantage which the Germans would otherwise have obtained from the wedge driven into our line at Villeret and Hargicourt.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

LORRIES NEAR BELLICOURT

The rise in the foreground is Cologne Ridge, and halfway down it are the remains of Ronssoy-Quennemont Farm. In the distance—though invisible in this reproduction—lies Bellicourt itself. Standing as it did on the Hindenburg Line, on the main St. Quentin–le Catelet–Lille road, and immediately above the St. Quentin Canal Tunnel, this village assumed immense importance in the late summer of 1918. It was recaptured, together with Nauroy, 2 km. east of it, by the 30th American Division, the 5th Australian Division afterwards clearing both places.

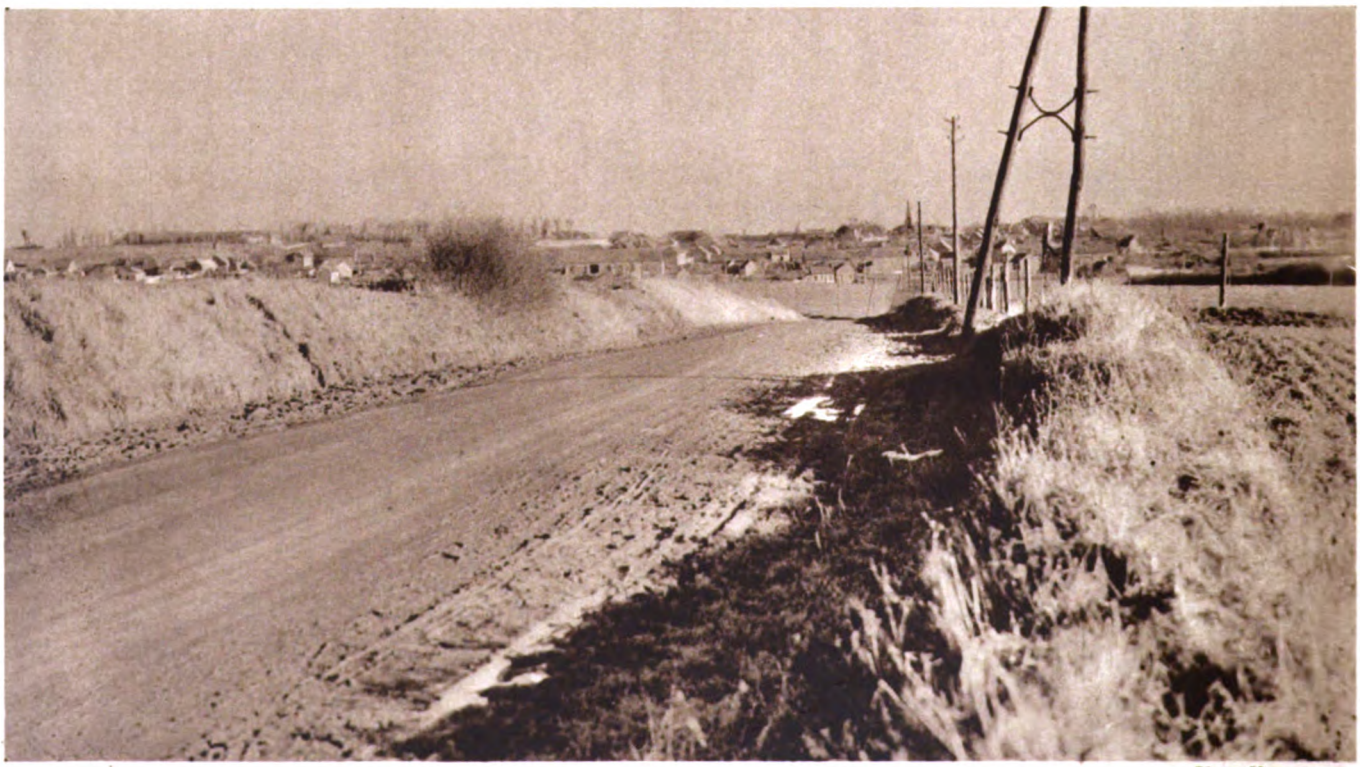

Photo: Keystone

THE NEW ROAD INTO BELLICOURT

Although still in the distance, Bellicourt is plainly to be seen in this picture. It boasts one British cemetery, containing 869 United Kingdom, 305 Australian, 5 South African, 1 Canadian, and 3 Chinese fallen. Ronssoy, the village which lends its name to the farm in the upper picture, lies a good 6 km. further north-west—almost due north of Hargicourt. It too possesses one cemetery, in which lie 38 United Kingdom (mostly 6th Connaught Rangers), 7 Canadian, and 1 German dead.

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many of them became unusable, and a report was sent back that "everyone was enjoying the novel experience of killing Germans in lumps at point-blank range."

By 1 p.m. the hostile tide had ebbed back, leaving heaps of dead and wounded behind; but some of the enemy came on again, throwing the weight of their onslaught once more upon the junction between the 2nd and 47th Divisions. Again some of our forward posts were overwhelmed, but only after taking such a terrible toll of the Germans that when, two days later, an attempt was made to recover our men's bodies, it was impossible to find them amid the heaps of German dead.

In the Canal sector the Germans had more success. Our front lines were swamped and wiped out, but the supports, by incessant bombing and repeated fierce counter-attacks, stemmed the advance. One company of the 13th Essex, near Lock No. 5 on the Canal, was isolated and completely surrounded. The Germans made repeated attempts to rush it, all in vain; but the defenders' ammunition began to fail, and in the late afternoon the officers and N.C.O.'s assembled to decide whether they should fight on or surrender. All agreed to fight to the last.

Two men stole back through the surrounding enemy and reported the critical state of the little band, and efforts were made to rescue it, but without success. Throughout the night it could be heard still fighting on as had been agreed, until at last, when not a bomb or a round of ammunition was left, the handful of survivors made honourable terms of surrender with the enemy.

One Man Maims 94—Wins V.C.

Early the next morning, another fierce hostile attack took place in the Canal sector, when the 17th Middlesex Battalion was forced back. The enemy swarmed forward into the gap thus made in our line, and for the moment the situation looked critical. Then Captain McReady Diarmid, commanding "D" Company, snatching up a plentiful supply of bombs, rushed forward and attacked the Germans almost alone. He threw his bombs one after another with such speed and accuracy that in a very few minutes he had killed or wounded no less than 94 of the enemy, whose bodies were counted when the trench was finally reoccupied by us. This gallant officer himself was killed, and was deservedly awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A SCENE NEAR GRAINCOURT

Tanks of "G" Battalion, 40th Division, passing captured guns near the village of Graincourt, on their way to the attack on Bourlon Wood, November 23rd, 1917. Graincourt-lez-Havrincourt lies almost due south of Bourlon Wood and Village, with the dead-straight Bapaume—Cambrai road running between. The place had been among our many captures of November 20th, but was destined to be lost again at the close of the month.

Fresh attempts by the Germans on December 2nd made no further progress, though hand-to-hand fighting took place at several points. The wounded men refused to allow themselves to be taken to the rear, and some were propped up by their comrades and continued to use their rifles until they were too weak from loss of blood to hold them. One man, when approached by stretcher-bearers who had come to take him away, told them to "go to the devil and not rob him of such a rare chance of killing Huns."

The 56th Division south of Mœuvres had an equally fiery ordeal to endure. German storming-parties massed close in front of its line under cover of trench-mortar and field-artillery fire, and then, as the barrage lifted, sprang upon its parapets to rush the defending posts; but everywhere they were swept away by the rifles, machine guns, and rifle grenades of our men. One man, in charge of a Stokes gun, continued firing long after the stand had been destroyed, holding the barrel between his legs.

At one point, where the 8th Middlesex held the front, the Germans flooded into our forward trench. Colonel Pank, in the headquarters dug-out, ordered all his signallers and gunners to man the support line, and himself, at the head of a handful of men, carried out a counter-attack down a communication trench, throwing bombs and driving back the enemy. Here again the line was quickly restored, and by nightfall the Germans had been completely repulsed.

The Bourlon—Mœuvres Front

"The 56th Division had been in line prior to the British attack of the 20th November, in which its right brigade had taken part, and since that date had captured and held about a mile of the Hindenburg line west of Mœuvres, including Tadpole Copse. Almost con-

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stant fighting had taken place in this area since our attack, and the division, which at one time had been holding a front of 11,000 yards, had already been subjected to a very severe strain. . . .

" The story of the subsequent fighting on the Bourlon—Mœuvres front is one so brimful of heroism that it deserves to take its place in English history for all time. The most determined attacks of four German divisions, with three other German divisions in support, were utterly crushed by the unconquerable resistance of the three British divisions in line. The 30th November, 1917, will be a proud day in the lives of all those splendid British soldiers who, by their single-hearted devotion to duty, prevented what would have become a serious situation had they given way. . . .

" At 9.20 a.m., the enemy had been seen advancing from the north towards the Canal-du-Nord, and subsequently attack after attack was delivered by him on both sides of the canal against the 6th and 169th Infantry Brigades. South of Mœuvres the enemy succeeded in gaining an entry, but was driven back by a bombing-attack after heavy fighting. . . .

" From Mœuvres westward to Tadpole Copse a desperate struggle was taking place for the possession of the Hindenburg line, in the course of which the enemy at one time reached the Battalion Headquarters of the 8th Middlesex Regt., attached to the 168th Brigade, 56th Division.

Vying in Valour

" Though much reduced in strength by the fighting of the preceding days, and hard-pressed by superior forces, the troops of the 168th and 169th Brigades beat off all attacks. Queen's Westminsters, London Scottish, and the men of the 1/2nd Bn. London Regt., and 1/8th Bn. Middlesex Regt., vied with another in the valour of their resistance. . . . At the end of this day of high courage and glorious achievement, except for a few advanced positions, some of which were afterwards regained, our line had been maintained intact."[1]

Limited as had been the success of the German counter-offensive, General Byng had now to decide whether it was worth while persisting in the retention of all the ground occupied by his army on the battlefield. Our line formed a salient exposed to attack from three sides, and so narrow as to be extremely vulnerable to hostile artillery fire. To remain in possession of it, therefore, involved a continuous stream of casualties, serious administrative difficulties, and a heavy strain on the front line troops.

After considerable discussion, it was decided to shorten our line and render it more secure by a partial withdrawal; and on the night of December 4th, when all arrangements had been systematically and carefully completed, our troops fell back to a position in rear, roughly corresponding to the line of the Hindenburg Support Line.

It was only with reluctance that this decision was come to, for it was fully realised that the enemy would claim it as a victory; but its wisdom was undoubted, and the great German attack in March, 1918, found our front solidly established in this quarter, and fully capable of resisting the enemy's utmost effort.

[1] *The 56th Division*, pp. 203–4.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A PATH INTO NO MAN'S LAND

A sap running out into No Man's Land from the Hindenburg Line, and threading its way cunningly amid the maze of German wire. This picture bears the date December 10th, 1917, by which time the initial successes of the Battle of Cambrai had been to a large extent effaced in the minds of the troops by the long sequence of dismal after-events. By December 7th such of our territorial gains as had not been recovered by the enemy were counterbalanced by recent German gains to the south of them.

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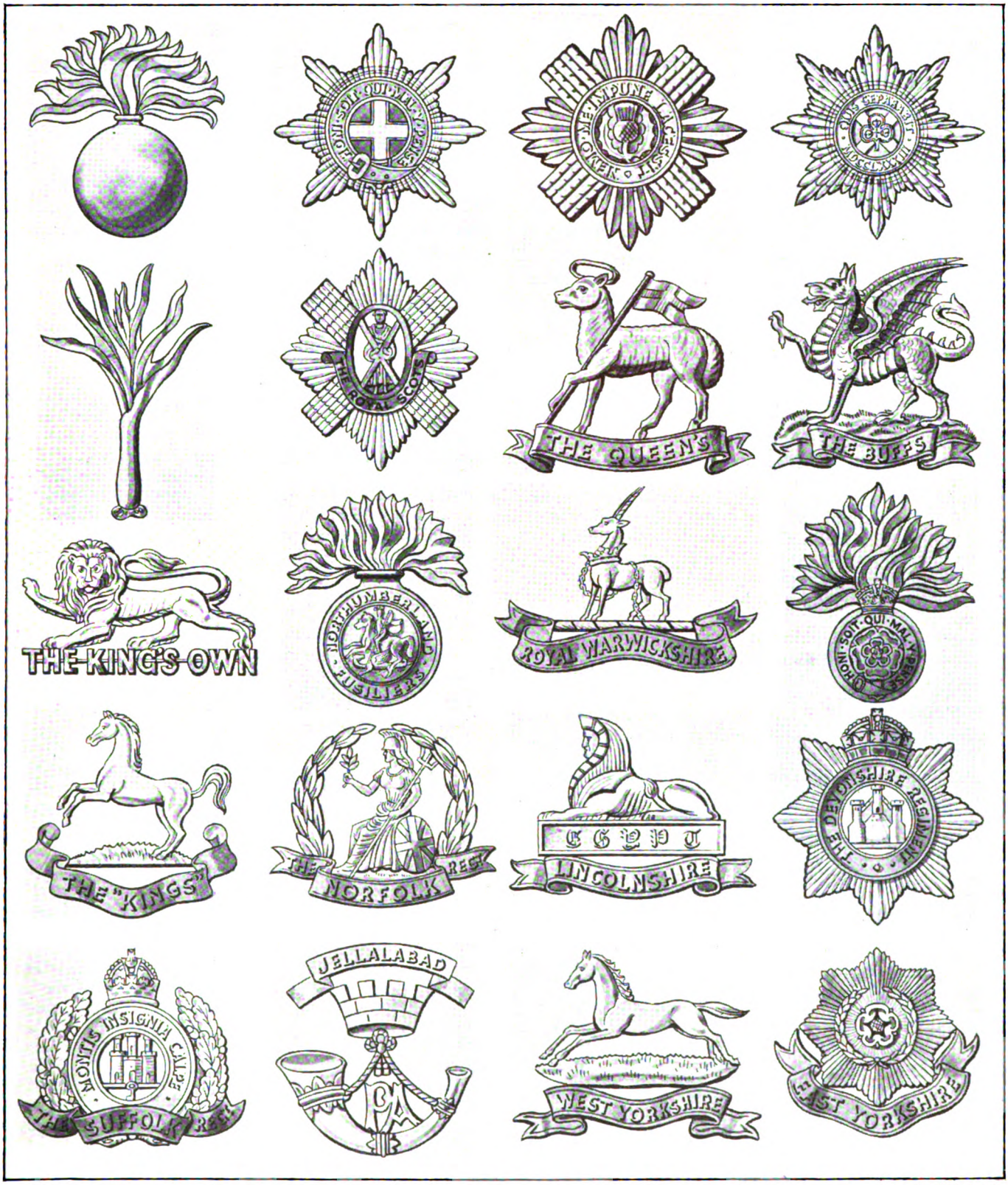

Specially drawn.

BADGES—SELECTION SIX

From top left to bottom right, progressing horizontally, the badges on this page represent: 1—Grenadier Guards. 2—Coldstream Guards. 3—Scots Guards. 4—Irish Guards. 5—Welsh Guards. 6—The Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment). 7—The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). 8—The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). 9—The King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment). 10—The Northumberland Fusiliers. 11—The Royal Warwickshire Regiment. 12—The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). 13—The King's (Liverpool Regiment). 14—The Norfolk Regiment. 15—The Lincolnshire Regiment. 16—The Devonshire Regiment. 17—The Suffolk Regiment. 18—Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry). 19—The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment). 20—The East Yorkshire Regiment.

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CHAPTER LXXII

MEMORIES XV.—A MACHINE-GUNNER LOOKS BACK

The machine gun, few will be found to deny, has been responsible for revolutionary changes in the handling of troops in war. Perhaps no type of weapon is more effective. A weakness in the British Army of 1914 was the lack of an adequate establishment of machine guns, and some time was to elapse before the deficiency was made good. A potent instrument in the hands of a defending force, the machine gun was responsible for a high proportion of the total casualties sustained by all the combatants in 1914–18; more than this, an enormous number of attacks were broken up by machine-gun fire, and the assaulting troops driven back to their own lines. In this chapter a machine-gunner recalls his days with the Corps in France.

LISTEN! You will hear again the hoarse cry of "Action! Fire!" The ears are dinned by the vaunting chatter of a barrage battery, a throbbing maniac melody to the boom of cannon and the deafening clang of metal. The teeth are set; the bones stand white from grimed hands as they bear upon the thumb-piece; bleared eyes hold the sights as the gun is tapped across its traverse, boring great holes in the incoming attack. . . . The black steel weapon, with its intricate mechanism, is at once friend and most dreaded enemy.

The "Suicide Corps"

Machine-gunners earned the title of the "Suicide Corps"—front-line soldiers who accompanied the first wave of the attack, and who remained to cover every retirement. The Machine Gun Corps was formed in October, 1915; by 1918 it numbered 159,000 men. The casualties reached 71,949—nearly half of the total strength. Not many of the original machine-gunners survived from 1914, when we pitted our few Maxims against an enemy who had mastered this, the "most lethal weapon of the war!"

When the warriors settled to trench warfare in the winter of 1914, we dug an emplacement in a ditch in front of Armentières. Knee-deep in slime, we were incredibly dirty, seldom shaven, plagued with lice, and such shelter as we obtained from the pitiless rain and shelling was secured by gutting doors and flooring from the village of Bois Grenier. Our guns often jammed, for it was almost impossible to keep them clean and the ammunition-belts dry.

I had two posts, one in the upper story of a farmhouse just behind the line, the other in a saphead—turnips in front and a stream on my left, banked with a bastion of mud in sand-bags. From the former, we obtained a wonderful view of the enemy's line, and used to shoot at what appeared to be a favourite meeting-place for officers about 9.0 a.m. Good fun while it lasted, but eventually a direct hit by a heavy shell blew this post into a cloud of pink dust and rafters—fortunately when we had another engagement. The machine gun used to be described as "a weapon of opportunity"; a somewhat meaningless slogan, even if on this occasion it was proved correct.

At the other post we dug continuously at the clinging clay in an effort to defeat the rising water by erecting a dyke. One night I had been snatching a little fitful sleep in a narrow scoop cut in this dyke, when in the dark hours of the early morning, there was a wild cry: "The dam's burst!" I was dragged from the scoop, into which torrents of water were pouring, and ran along the open ground extricating men half-drowned, and the old Maxim gun. Three men perished.

Impromptu Armistice

The German trenches, too, were flooded. The cheerless morning found us seated on the parapet with such poor cover as could be provided by empty ammunition-boxes and turnip-tops, facing two companies of a Saxon regiment in a similar predicament. They waved feebly to us. That was the beginning of a three weeks' armistice while we made breastworks. We borrowed mallets, exchanged timber for wire, and "fraternised" over a football in No Man's Land. When all was complete, with some humour, we formally declared war, and gave our attentions again to the "devil's water-pots."

The heavy Maxim was replaced by the Vickers' gun. My gunners were in ecstasy beside this purring weapon as it poured its increasing stream of lead. Behind our breastworks one farmer, at least, with complete indifference to the quarrel, neither of his seeking nor his making, would walk the furrows stolidly for hours behind a great white *percheron* as stolid as himself. The Germans showed this attractive target a most kindly tolerance, though he had his warnings; and eventually, despite loud protestations, the old man was removed by British authority. His fields were never sown.

I have the most vivid memory of all the machine-gun positions—chosen, be it noted, according to the lie of the ground and that unique characteristic of the machine gun, its fixed platform, which enables it to be the "nerveless" weapon. At the Brickstacks at Cuinchy, mined and counter-mined, I took a section over in a raid, and we brought back three German machine guns, turning them to good account against their late owners.

In the Sensée Valley, by Fontaine-les-Croisilles, two years ago I found one of my old positions; the chalk had crumbled a little, but otherwise the emplacement was as it had been, with thousands of empty cartridge-cases scattered around to tell the tale. I found a position, also, in front of Lesbœufs, where 10 guns fired just short of 1,000,000 rounds in 12 hours to cover a successful attack.

I doubt if at any other period, except at "Third Ypres," were machine-gunners submitted to such ardours. Pack mules foundered and disappeared beneath the treacly slime, and men became engulfed waist-deep in the effort to bring their heavy loads to the firing-

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positions. Shell-fire, cold, and torrents of rain added to the discomfort.

Grotesque Decoration

There was a marvellous position, too, behind Old Boots trench hard by Loos, with an amazing view of the German activity around Fosse 8 and the formidable Hohenzollern Redoubt. The area was a labyrinth of trenches—British, French, and German. Bits of Frenchmen, and hands and feet of Germans, stuck grotesquely out of the parapets and crumbling trench-sides. There was a chaos of tins, and rusty rifles of many patterns.

With these last the French had gone to war; and from the rat-chewed trousers covering a bleak pelvis-bone I could judge how suddenly the French reserves were called up, for these trousers were red; and long blue overcoats like dressing-gowns, sometimes crowned with a *képi*, hung beside the collapsing dug-outs. It was in these festering ditches that the myriads of rats which swarmed the trenches were billeted, and held their war councils.

Here, too, apart from the organised line of infantry, machine-gunners, unsuspected by the enemy, made their plans, and hailed the German working and ration parties, reliefs, and supports, with a storm of steel. In the first assault at Loos, of dreadful memory, my gun-teams, among the shattered assaulting brigade, suffered heavy casualties. We crept forward, and from a convenient hollow witnessed the counter-attack sweep across the horizon. Then we fired and exacted the penalty.

On the Somme, there was a position on the island of Omiécourt, and we fashioned an "ironclad" from an old punt hung around with steel helmets. In this craft, propelled by an oar in the stern, we would sally forth at night on the river and enfilade the German lines.

The Machine Gun Corps came into being, after Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, and Loos had been fought, with an *esprit de corps* of its own, dedicated in service to the spirit of the gun. You will remember the gun-team which, somewhere in No Man's Land, lay dead beside its weapon, conquered yet unconquerable. . . . There was a lad at High Wood, with one arm hanging by a bloody thread, who carried ammunition to a close-invested post. . . .

Machine-gun Heroes

There was a driver at the Hindenburg Line, who, the mark of every hostile

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TURNING THE TABLES

It is certainly incautious, and probably unjust, to single out any arm as having contributed a greater part than the rest to the winning of the War. Just as every campaign, even the "side-shows" in Africa and the Near East, were essential to the final victory, so every branch of the forces fulfilled an essential rôle in the gradual domination of the enemy. None will wish to deny, however, that if ever men had a grim task and acquitted themselves right well in it—and we speak for enemies as well as allies—the machine-gunners were such men. Here we see an officer and man of the Machine Gun Corps carrying a captured German machine gun into position for use against the enemy near the notorious Mouquet Farm, September, 1916.

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gun, shot through the stomach and belching blood, toppled his limber with its precious load of ammunition into our beleaguered line, and perished among his dying mules.

There was a young company leader, whose command had been reduced by half, who at Polygon Wood in September, 1917, turned defeat into a notable victory. He reorganised his machine-gun batteries, and pressed forward to the attack. Although assailed from the air by low-flying German machines, and subjected to a tornado of shell-fire, wave after wave of infantry were hammered as they rose to the counter-attack. One German regiment sustained the loss of 16 officers and 1,250 other ranks in casualties. That officer is now a bishop, with the D.S.O.

There was the artificer at Delville Wood whose fingers repaired intricate machinery, while a field-dressing supported a shattered arm; and the pioneer at Meteren who built a stockade, with a length of barbed wire embedded by shell-fire in his thigh.

There was a lad at Arras who crept forward in the darkness, captured an enemy stronghold single-handed, and turned the German machine gun against the enemy's lines, raking the parapet when our attack developed at dawn. And there was a private who, when all the officers and N.C.O.'s of his company had become casualties, added a Bar to his D.C.M. and gained his direct regular commission in the field. Within a month he held the rank of major and added a Military Cross to his record.

There are thousands of such actions which the M.G.C. added to the scroll of its fame. The Machine Gun Corps Memorial at Hyde Park Corner bears the legend "Saul slew his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." Bitter memory, but one which is a fitting epitaph to the gun and to those who served it.

At the Battle of the Lys, 12th–18th April, 1918, the legend was fully exemplified. Beside Meteren, in front of Hazebrouck, the gateway vital to the Channel ports, a wide gap of some three miles existed. The German hammer-blows had dispersed the defence, and Ludendorff poured division after division into the breach: my battalion was thrown in to help stem the tide.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FANCY DRESS?

Well, anyway, fancy headwear. A contingent of motor-cycle machine-gunners "parades" with souvenirs captured at Contalmaison, July, 1916. It will be recalled that the British had reached the outskirts of this Somme village on July 7th, and that it was captured on the morning of the 14th by the 1st Black Watch and 1st Camerons, with the 1st Gloucesters in support. The part played by machine-gunners is evident from what they have brought back.

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During the Battle of the Lys

On our way up by train, a huge shell hit a truck, killing 40 of my men. We had no transport, but we seized a motor-lorry and hurried men, guns, and ammunition to the ridge on which stood the Hoegenacker Mill, while streams of peasants with crazy carts, hurling abuse at their saviours with characteristic ignorance and something of malice, hurried from the scene. On and behind the ridge, 64 Vickers' guns were disposed and there stood their ground. They were so arranged in depth as to bring both direct and indirect barrage fire upon the front.

No less than 8 German divisions, with elements of three others, endeavoured to take that position, and were decimated by fire. Two signallers in the mill-top, later blown sky-high, passed down information as to the movements of the enemy, massing in woods and behind hedgerows for the attack; and two hundred horsemen, debouching from cover, within a few seconds became a struggling heap of mangled flesh.

Days of fierce fighting were followed by nights of tense anxiety as the storm troops sought to infiltrate through the machine-gun posts, and sometimes overwhelmed the teams. But the ground was held. Ammunition began to run short, despite the heroic efforts of the lorry-driver, who scoured the countryside for the machine-gunners' bread of battle.

On the third day, the transport arrived, and units of infantry. Beneath a storm of shrapnel and machine-gun fire, the drivers hurled their animals round the gun-posts, distributing ammunition in a manner reminiscent of an Aldershot field day, while infantry stood and cheered. Bailleul had fallen. I rode through its empty streets on my return from a reconnaissance of the left flank to find Meteren in flames, and the enemy with a lodgment among its houses.

A line was, however, being established. We pressed stragglers into our service, and dug and wired a trench. The enemy, still undaunted, came on, but we piled their corpses before our gun positions, and our line held. The machine gun, and gunners, had done their job.[1]

Ruler of the Battlefield

It was then that the true rôle of the machine gun came to be understood—its mobility, its capacity for manœuvre, the deadly effect of its direct fire, the impenetrable curtain created by its barrage fire, the need to its service of the best physique and the highest intelligence, the fact that the framework of defence and attack, upon which infantry build, is the machine gun; in short, that it is the machine gun which rules the battlefield.

Following the most stupendous bombardment the world had ever known, the British prepared to go forward on 1st July, 1916, and were greeted by notices posted on the broken German defences—"Come on. We are ready for you!" As the artillery lifted, German machine-gunners leaped into action and smote the attack. 60,000 British soldiers fell on that day, and almost everywhere the attack was held. A fearful lesson—yet to be learned.

Machine-gun battalions were formed only in February, 1918. They represented the infantry and cavalry of the whole army. There were men from the turmoil of an Empire's metropolis, and from the blue haze of the English countryside; Scots, Irish, and Welsh from heathered hills and smoke-laden cities; bare-legged boys from shingled coves; old soldiers who remembered Darghai and Magersfontein, and were familiar with the *Bat*, the *Bhisti*,

From a drawing by Bruce Bairnsfather.

A MAXIM MAXIM

Fire should be withheld until a favourable opportunity presents itself.

[1] For this action the 33rd Batt. M.G.C. received 1 D.S.O., 4 M.C.'s, 14 D.C.M.'s, and 22 M.M.'s. It also received a "Record" from the IX Corps, of which only 6 were ever awarded.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE SORRY REMAINS OF THE VILLAGE OF BIACHES

Biaches stands on the left bank of the Somme immediately opposite Péronne, of which it may therefore be considered a suburb. On July 1st, 1916, it was in the keeping of the *XVII Corps*, behind the German third line and opposite the French I Colonial Corps. The successful advance which enabled the latter to take Assevillers on July 3rd also paved the way for an advance along the Bray—Péronne road to the very gates of Péronne; and Biaches, which marked the furthest limit of French progress, fell to our Allies on July 9th.

and the *Blockhouse*; those whose mother tongues included every English dialect, and whose calling was of the field, the mine, the loom, the bench, the press, and the counting-house; Canadians, Australians, South Africans—in its spirit the Corps was the great exemplar of unity in diversity; and its honour was crowned by the colonelcy of His Majesty King George V.

Both the technique of the weapon and the isolation of its posts and the independence of its operations demanded the closest mutual reliance between those who served the guns. Only leadership of the highest order would suffice. The officer had to know his job and his men intimately. It could not have been otherwise, for upon machine guns depended the issue of the day. Moments are reached in the crisis of battle when the senses respond to nought but that intangible, that all-pervading quality, generated and inspired by the spiritual sentiment which is known as the honour of the corps.

Gaiety and Recklessness

The gun-units became, therefore, almost a club, with its sense of comradeship emotionally developed to the highest exaltation of courage and self-sacrifice. A gaiety and recklessness pervaded the ranks of the Corps, the men were devil-may-care—a "suicide" club indeed, although, in action, the delicacy of the mechanism and the complexity of a barrage chart exacted the most strict fire discipline.

Such disregard for formality and "red tape" was illustrated when we "scrounged" the band of a Regular battalion, turned them into machine-gunners over-night during the desperate operations at Meteren in April, 1918, transferred them to the Corps in proper form, and finally sent an officer on leave to purchase and bring back instruments. No protest of any kind for the return of the band availed: and, re-equipped, it played before King George V and Their Majesties of Belgium, and finally led the battalion in its march of victory towards Maubeuge shortly before the Armistice.

When the "break through" came in September, 1918, the astonishing mobility of the machine gun was well proved. We pushed forward, and with the use of the half limber, jolting and bumping over abandoned trenches and works, were often well ahead of the measured advance of the infantry lines. The Germans achieved terrible results with the machine guns covering their retirement. I well remember the fearful scene in Targelle Valley, as we were about to make the passage of the St. Quentin Canal—line after line of British

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

RAPIDLY GROWING VENERABLE

This is a contemporary photograph, showing how the ruins of the sugar-factory at Biaches have been left exactly as they were when the Armistice precluded further pounding. The village, it may be remarked, lies in the midst of a region largely devoted to the beet-sugar industry. In the background is the Somme, and beyond it, on the extreme left, the church of Ste. Radegonde. Péronne lies just out of sight.

infantry, platoon officers at their head, lying dead, as they had been caught by bands of fire.

Before the British advance could be made more secure, our young troops had yet to learn to use the automatic rifle, the Lewis, which has no characteristics of a "gun," in the infiltration tactics of which the Germans were masters: to wait, also, until the machine gun was well in position to cover an attack in force.

It is not numbers which win battles, but fire-power. Realisation of this fact by higher commanders presented its "opportunity" to the machine gun, and relieved it of its poor slogan, a "weapon of opportunity," which in the earlier stages of the War so seldom was realised.

The Crossing of the Sambre

The crossing of the River Sambre, leading to Maubeuge, presented enormous difficulties to my machine-gun battalion. We had led the division through the Forêt de Mormal, that this mighty reserve of fire-power might be available at the outset to shatter resistance and enable the advance to continue. It was our last action in November, 1918. The Germans were strongly entrenched on high ground, and had blown up the bridges. We had advanced rapidly through the forest, and were now confronted by the river.

The only way to make the passage was to drive limbers on to the river-bed and thus improvise a bridge. From our position of cover behind a sugar refinery, I called for volunteers for four limbers. The drivers gathered their reins and turned their horses' heads, ready for the order to go forward. The shrill staccato of machine guns and the loud crack of bursting shrapnel deafened the ears. They were off. Spurs bit deep into the flesh of the straining animals, whips descended with a thwack upon their flanks. The mules leaped forward, turning from cover into the open.

20 yards. The mules had gathered speed; 30, 40 yards. Almost halfway, the limbers rolling and crashing through the undergrowth. The onlookers, recklessly exposing themselves, cheered and yelled with excitement. 50 yards. The driver on the right drooped over in his saddle: the near-side animal plunged, stumbled, and fell headlong with its rider, dragging the off-side animal down. 60 yards.

The other three limbers, as if in a chariot race in a Roman arena, crashed forward, leaving the fallen kicking hideously in the tangled traces. Another storm of bullets struck the riders, of whom a second, throwing his hands upwards, toppled backwards, his head and chest torn with bullets, on to the pole between his wounded animals.

Slightly ahead, they swerved across another limber, fouling its wheels. 80 yards! The fouled limber tilted dangerously, one wheel spinning in the air. The driver laid his mules over, steadying the bounding limber. Another crash of bullets, and the animals in the right-flank limber fell headlong, throwing the waggon on to its side, the driver falling and being pinned under a wheel.

A Pageant of Heroism

One driver alone had stayed the course. Blooded spurs bit deep, while reins were held tightly to keep the mules' heads straight for the water.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

OLD AND NEW

Biaches new church has been built on the exact site of its predecessor, and the tall house on the right marks the location of a war-time cemetery, now no more. In the foreground are more ruins of the old sugar factory. During the March Retreat, the XIX Corps fell back on Biaches on March 23rd, and was forced to abandon it on the 25th—the 66th Division, on the right of the 39th, being mainly concerned. In the final advance Biaches was reached at the extreme end of August.

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The beasts leaped from the river-bank far into the stream, and the spinning wheels came after. The flat bottom of the limber met the water with a smack. There was a great splash. Then the wheels settled to the bed of the river. The job was partly done. What a pageant of heroism!

Already some of us, bootless and stripped to the waist, were creeping forward with guns, ammunition, and baulks of timber torn from the floors to build the bridge. Meanwhile 30 guns had been mounted in the forest edge, and hammered the German lines, while the two leading companies struggled forward on their bellies, with machine guns which on the far side of the river might hold the enemy while the infantry advanced to the capture of the ground.

A second group of limbers formed up to rush to the river. A veteran, uttering strange oaths, reviled a pair of chestnuts as they strained at the traces. Bullets cracked in the air like a whiplash, but on sped the limbers. The old soldier crashed, his steel helmet battered into his brain, the chestnuts a squealing, bullet-ridden mass of kicking horse-flesh. A burst of fire smote a second limber. The driver slid from the saddle. The woodwork of the limber ripped and tore, a wheel splintered. The maddened, wounded animals swerved, and presented a broadside to the enemy; a second burst of fire bit deeply into their flesh, and they collapsed in the wreckage.

But another team, unscathed, plunged into the stream. I remember the driver afterwards remarking: "I'd make me fortune at the 'Ippodrome' . . . but I wouldn't do it agin for a thahsand quid." Nine days later came the Armistice; and now—despite his accent—he ploughs a pleasant vale in Cumberland.

We manœuvred limbers into position, lashing timbers to their bottoms. Within a few minutes, crawling men, dragging machine guns and ammunition, began to slip over the river-bank, and splashed through the water across the planks. The first four gun-teams went forward, taking cover behind shrubs and buildings, moving as best they could in order to outflank the enemy's position.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE RONVILLE—BEAURAINS ROAD

The interest of this "Then and Now" pair lies mainly in the evidence which it affords concerning the spread of Arras since the War. To look at this view, one would imagine it to have been taken in the heart of the country—and so, to all intents and purposes, it was; for in the War days several kilometres separated Beaurains from Arras proper, and, apart from wrecked houses scattered along the main road, there were few urban evidences. Now, however, as is shown by the modern view opposite, Beaurains (illustrated on pages 1146 and 1147) is indistinguishable from the larger town. The above photograph is dated June 30th, 1917.

Eddies of Blood

For a while the path to the improvised bridge-head was a death-trap. Killed and wounded men toppled into the water, some being carried downstream, others becoming locked against the limber wheels. Eddies of blood mingled themselves with the curling waters. At immense cost, the opposition to the enemy was being erected, the battle was going forward. And soon the devil's shrill tattoo of 30 machine guns in action was heard above the pandemonium.

The grey ranks of Germany, fighting the most tremendous rearguard action of all history, staggered farther east, while machine guns, regrouped in batteries for indirect long-range fire, harassed their retreat. The victory went to the machine gun and to the mule.

No poet has sung the praises of this ungainly quadruped. Without doubt, the mule has been the victim of more abuse, curses, obscene oaths, and brutality than the rest of the world's animals put together. The hymn of unprintable blasphemy ascends to Heaven! Beasts of burden in very truth: "stubborn as a mule" is a sarcasm. But we have also heard "sure-footed as a mule."

We have only to remember the long night drives across devastated fields and dangerous roads constructed from rocking sleepers with no light beyond that of the fog-veiled star shells or the flash of bursting cordite; the years of endless toil, with short, so-called rests, picketed

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY

The urbanisation of Beaurains and its vicinity, however it may appear from an æsthetic viewpoint, undoubtedly bespeaks a fine revival of trade in the Arras region. Ronville is even closer in to the main town than Beaurains, and is, indeed, correctly called the Faubourg de Ronville, which classifies it as an inner suburb. Both it and Beaurains must be remembered by many old soldiers as billeting spots, although, apart from the capture of Beaurains on March 18th, 1917, there is little of a more active nature to record concerning either place.

among kicking friends, up to the hocks in freezing mud, or facing a dust-storm.

I remember one such mule; we called him "Dunny" from the colour of his hide. He bore traces of shrapnel, and we made fun of him and dressed him up in trousers, pulled him backwards by his leathery tail, perched an old hat on his head, and led him out as the clown of a horse-show or to be mocked by peasant children in the villages behind the line. And "Dunny" just smiled.

That may be difficult to believe; but no one disputes that a dog will grin, and the smile of a mule, to say nothing of its high-pitched, ribald laughter, is a very wonderful thing. Mules seldom smiled, but often laughed; and that is a subtle distinction. When a mule laughs, men run for their lives, but when "Dunny" smiled, men came to the beast without fear, and with affection.

Heroes and Horrors

In retrospect, as the memory sweeps over four years of war in France and Flanders, the horrors seem to sink in a misty background from which emerge the peaks of heroism, of joyous interludes in billets, and radiant recollections of warm friendship. In such comradeship as was that of duty to the gun, the services of the batman were priceless. No matter at what hour I would return to a cubby-hole or dug-out for sleep, it was as dry and warm as human ingenuity could make it.

Small comforts he conjured from behind the lines without any promptings from me. He would arrange my note-book with carbons between its pages, clean my field glasses and map instruments, keep me supplied with tobacco, dry my boots, mend socks and shirts, and render a hundred other services for my better efficiency and comfort. He was omnipresent.

"Where's my shaving water?"—and it came steaming in a tin mug from which he had hastily thrown his own cup of tea. "I want to wash"—and two hands beneath a bowed head would bear an empty biscuit tin filled with hot water which may have taken an hour's heating over recalcitrant coke, blown to red heat by a batman's lungs. "Find me some cigarettes"—the batman would retire, take the last packet from his tunic, and return unselfishly smiling. When I went over the top, he was by my side. When I dropped, my batman was close to me with healing hands and presence. When the batman dropped he was alone.

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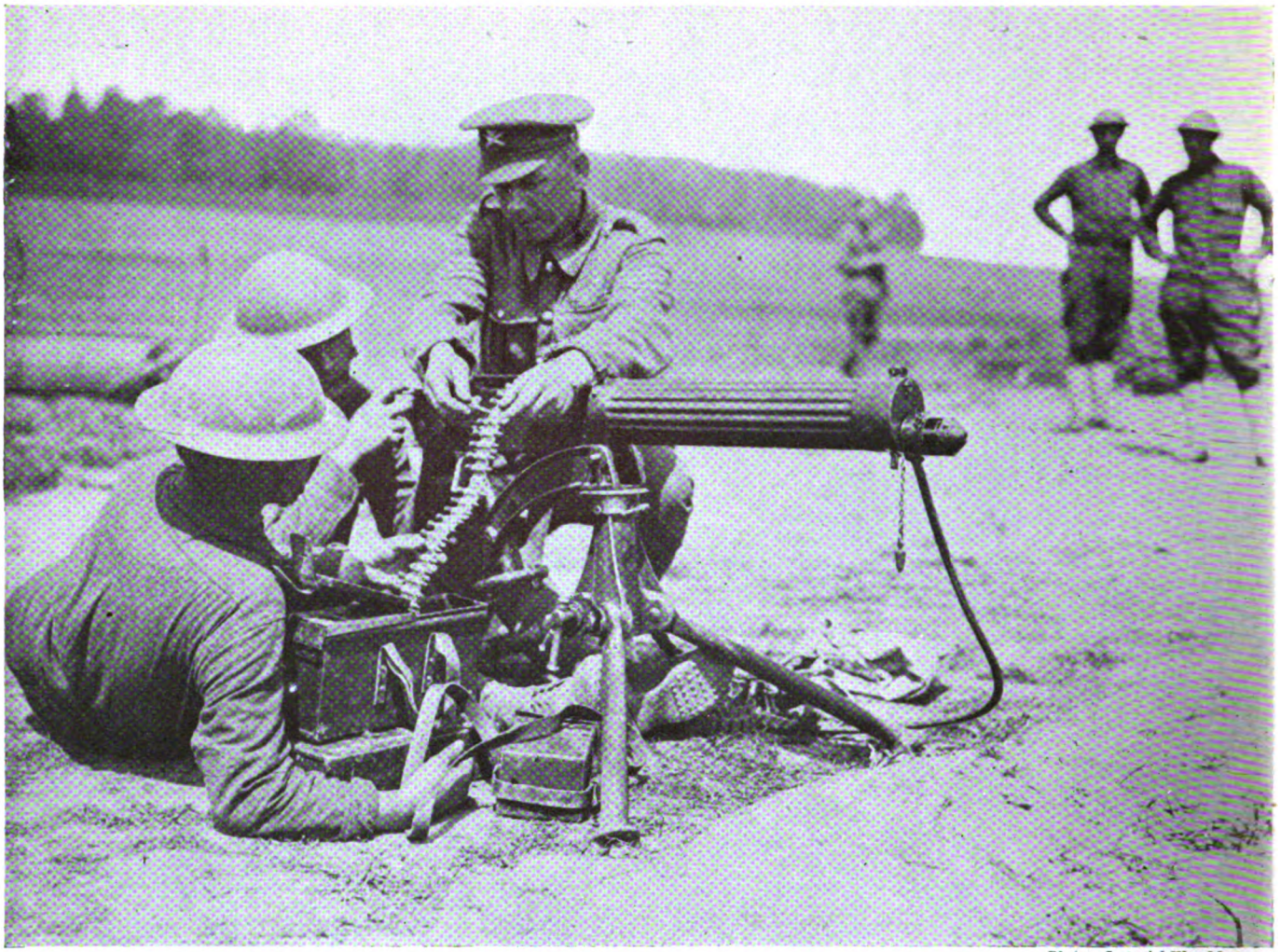

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AMERICANS IN TRAINING

Machine-gunners of the 77th American Division photographed during training under the 39th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps, on May 22nd, 1918. The picture comes from near Moulle. The bulk of training of the American troops had to be effected in the Western Front back areas, and for this purpose an extensive system of training-schools was established in the American zone, grouped round a great school centre at Langres. After instruction, the Americans would be interspersed among the more experienced troops of the other Allies.

The needs of the battlefield carried me away from one who, by his forethought, sacrifices, and ready service had penetrated quietly and unobtrusively into the heart of the master of his goings and comings. I knew him as one incapable of fear, sincere, modest, the garden of his mind overhung everywhere with the red roses of sacrifice.

In Memory of a Batman

After he had fallen, I returned to the earth-mound over which presided the little wooden cross. It lay close to the village of Chapelle d'Armentières, at Ration Farm, now a large cemetery well cared for by the Imperial War Graves Commission. I wrote in my diary:

"Under the walls of a little farmhouse lies a bullet-swept cemetery, filled with green mounds and white wooden crosses. The turf is torn by many shell-holes, and the air is rent with the sound of bullets, but when the tide of victorious battle has swept forward, in the quiet of a summer evening the flowers will close their eyes in prayer that peace may be with those poor lads who knew so little of peace in death. And when the winter's storm robs the blossoms of their life, and as the flowers—those silent sentinels—droop at their post and die, so will the roots, taking firm hold, live and maintain the vigil. Even so the body dies, but the soul lives for ever."

Such friendships are immortal, and everywhere illumine the fearful memory of the stricken battlefield.

The 11th November, 1918, found us at Petit Maubeuge. We hastily improvised a torchlight procession, with the band at its head, and set light to a gigantic bonfire built opposite to the former German officers' club. We carried the bewildered *maire* to open the proceedings with a speech, and then loosed off a pyrotechnic display of coloured signal lights.

The beacon blazed, the band played, and we sang and cheered and poured beer down our throats. Whence came that beer? In anticipation of the Armistice, the master scrounger of the transport lines had driven far and in haste, evading the vigilance of the military police, in search of barrels: a feat of resolution which almost matched that of the passage of the Sambre.

For Christmas we were billeted among a group of villages through which we had passed a few weeks earlier, liberating the inhabitants. Heads had then appeared at the windows, at first timidly and shyly, and afterwards old men, women, and children had run out

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LEWIS GUNNERS ON THE LYS, APRIL, 1918

The Lewis gun, though a mechanical quick-firing weapon, is not, of course, a machine gun proper. Nevertheless, it is fitting that a little space should be accorded to it among the illustrations to this chapter, since its functions were to a large extent the same. It is a lighter weapon than the machine gun, being built in one piece, and easily portable, while the machine gun is used in conjunction with a separate tripod, and is much too heavy for employment with an infantry platoon. Notice, too, the circular magazines as opposed to ammunition belts.

into the street. They must have been waiting for our advance, for a woman had a garland of flowers, and placed it round my neck as they do in India. I felt a little foolish, for they had cheered and wept and kissed my old trench boots as I rode down the main street.

Santa Claus—Army Style

I prepared for Christmas. Not an officer or man went without a gift from his commanding officer. I sent an officer to Paris, well supplied with money with which to buy presents for the children of all the surrounding villages. On Christmas morning, attired in a red curtain deftly sewn by the battalion tailor, with a flowing beard of white-washed tow and a top hat, mounted in the centre of a vast German waggon drawn by 64 mules, I began my tour of the villages.

An immense decorated fir tree had been strutted into the cart. The children were brought forward by their parents—most of them timidly, for they had never experienced *Père Noel*—and gave stirrup cups to the drivers, and beakers of wine to Father Christmas. We returned to battalion headquarters as a chariot race, mules lathered white, postillions rolling in their saddles, and Father Christmas hatless, with a threadbare beard, tottering in the middle of the cart. No wonder, for he had quaffed pints of wine, and kissed the multitude!

Men who revisit their war-time billets find, too, that they are held in kindly remembrance. Despite restrictions and impositions, the French and Flemish peasantry will open their hearts to all and any, except to those who showed a brusque contempt for their customs and modest requirements. Everything about peasant life, from dawn until dusk and long after, was an aggravation.

The Picard continued to tend his crops even where bullets sometimes lashed the waving corn, to cling to his tenement even when its roof had been torn and its walls gashed by gun fire. His house and barns were filled with soldiery, his fields picketed with horses, his pastures turned into parade and play-grounds. "*C'est la guerre,*" he would stoically exclaim with a shrug of the shoulder. Yet it stands to the credit of British soldiery that they would fight their battles in the morning and help the farmers of Picardy to stack their corn before the sun set.

Thus was reincarnated the tradition of King Henry V, who, in the long march to Agincourt, bade his soldiers—skilled marksmen likewise—take good heed to the needs of the inhabitants.

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Death and Resurrection

There are, as everyone should know, cranks among machine guns; there were few among the gunners. But although it was the law of the gun that its teams looked after their "No. 1," the last thing the gunner ever did was to think of his own comfort and security. In the end the men drifted back to their peaceful occupations, and the Machine Gun Corps was finally disbanded in 1922, although reincarnated in 1936 as machine-gun battalions.

Men who had gone away as boys stood with emotion, watching the peaceful markets of great cities which had never known the clatter of machine guns, and gazed over great tracts of pasture and woodland which knew not the "devil's tattoo." Proud of their service, yet they were filled with gladness. What, too, of the enemies who had contested every yard of their retreat? Many must soon have stood overlooking tiny villages clad in snow, and have murmured "*Liebe Heimat!*"

How joyous the spirit in us all that hands at last were released from crank-handle and belt, from thumb-piece and elevating wheel, of this relentless instrument of slaughter! Only the scenes of my youth remain fresh, so vividly sketched with the abiding joy of comradeship. It remains, stored in my heart.

Heroism and self-sacrifice are the background of the story of the Machine Gun Corps: transcending all else was the comradeship of trench and of billet, of camp-fire and of tent. We must carry comradeship always with us, and extend it. May each in his own way be a bearer of our traditions. Our success will be judged ultimately by our ability to pass on the traditions of the Corps. These I name—Courage, Endurance, Cheerfulness, Loyalty, Sacrifice, Comradeship.

Mutual Confidence

Indestructible cohesion, best of all qualities which a nation can possess, is based not alone upon hereditary resolution, but upon mutual confidence and respect. Here, finally, is that quality, which, in the relations between man and man, in good times and in bad, marks and distinguishes that which is worthy most of our remembrance, and which of all other qualities is to be cherished and to be continually nurtured. If we have learned how to serve the "devil's watering-pots," we have not forgotten how to pour out a mighty stream of goodwill and fellowship. That, lest we sometimes forget, requires an all-round traverse.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UNPERTURBED

This picture is a fine commentary on the iron nerve required by machine-gunners. It is not, as might well be thought, a vivid photograph of actual battle, but a scene during night-training at the Machine Gun School at Rombly during 1918. The gunners are being trained to carry on unmoved while a mine is detonated within a few yards of their position. In addition to machine-gunners from the Home Country, contingents were furnished by most of the Dominions, and fought right valiantly.

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CHAPTER LXXIII

THE HINDENBURG LINE REVISITED

No trench system on any of the battle fronts received anything approaching the publicity accorded to the Hindenburg Line. Nor was this surprising. It may be said that not, perhaps, since Hadrian built his famous wall in the north of England, had any line of fortifications been erected at such a cost in labour, time, and money. The Germans believed the Hindenburg Line to be impregnable, and although the system was eventually stormed, it can hardly be denied that only the finest of troops could have succeeded in such an enterprise. A writer who has recently toured the country of this famous defensive system describes it as it is to-day.

THE month of October, in the year 1916, was one of exceptionally bad weather, and the lynx-like watch normally maintained by the pilots and observers of the Royal Flying Corps on the enemy's activities behind his lines necessarily suffered from the poor visibility prevailing all along the Western Front during that period.

Airmen's Reports

But these conditions did not prevent the R.F.C. from spending most of its time on the German side of the lines; and during certain days of promise, rare as they were, the observers of the III Brigade, R.F.C., came back to their aerodromes situated behind Arras with reports of new trench works being prepared by the Germans in rear of their existing front-line system. In particular, they reported a line of trenches taking form and substance to the north of Quéant, some 10 miles back.

At first the object of these supplementary defences appeared to be precautionary and nothing more; but as time went on, and the trench-line gradually assumed the appearance of a truly formidable system, it became evident to the General Staff at G.H.Q. that the enemy was contemplating a whole-hearted withdrawal from the scene of the recent British offensive on either side of the Somme: a withdrawal that would remove the broad salient in which the German *Second* and *Sixth Armies* now found themselves, and shorten their front considerably.

The difficulty, of course, was to know when this withdrawal was likely to take place. On the 9th November—does anyone recollect whether London had its Lord Mayor's Show that year?—a strongly-protected reconnaissance of more than a dozen Royal Flying Corps officers, with the usual leavening of N.C.O.'s and air-mechanics (8 actual reconnoitring aeroplanes and 8 escorting fighters, all armed to the back teeth) made a close examination of the new trench-system, and brought back details which revealed an uninterrupted fortified line stretching from beyond Mœuvre (west, that is to say, of Bourlon Wood) to the existing German third line south-east of Arras, by way of Quéant and Bullecourt.

The pilgrim who to-day revisits the country of the Hindenburg Line, and spends the best part of a day in reaching it—say, from Arras or Bapaume along the meandering by-ways that intersect this vast, undulating district—should pause for a moment and consider the manner in which this great retirement began, and the way in which the preparations for it were discovered. The withdrawal, when it took place in 1917, was first reported by the Flying Corps.

The Retirement Begins

A flight of Sopwith Scout pilots, taking advantage of a bright afternoon in February, saw fires and explosions behind the German lines, reaching right back to the line of trenches referred to. Systematic destruction such as this could mean but one thing; and the reports of these and other pilots bore out the statements made by a prisoner, taken the day before, to the effect that orders had been issued for a retirement, by successive stages, to the Siegfried (or Hindenburg) Line. Nor was that all. The reconnaissance by the Sopwith pilots took place on the 25th. On the 26th another, made by another squadron, brought in details of the strength of the new positions.

Early in March, observers noticed that enemy batteries still in position on the existing front were firing with one gun apiece only, and a few days later reported that the German artillery was registering its fire on its own trenches in St. Pierre Vaast Wood, where German dug-outs were also seen to be on fire. At almost the same time, our infantry gained possession of a complete set of the German withdrawal plans, which were found in a dug-out in Loupart Wood, and from these it was discovered that the retirement proper was intended to begin on March 11th.

As the result of this discovery, a general advance was ordered to begin on the 17th; and thereafter until the opening of the Battle of Arras, on the 9th April, we moved slowly forward, stage by stage, on the heels of the retiring enemy, each yard of the move contested by an army ready at any moment to deliver a counter-stroke over ground it knew intimately.

The Hindenburg Line was one of the most remarkable achievements of the whole War—and in saying this I refer more to the conception which made it possible than to its actual construction, astonishing as that was. Whether or not it was the inspiration of the man by whose name it became known, or whether the idea came from a junior officer on his staff, does not really matter, although it would be interesting to learn the full story of the decision which led to the building of this gigantic fortress line. Certain it is that none but a German brain would have thought of such a scheme, as it were, in cold blood.

Our Methods and Theirs

It is the constant preoccupation of every General Staff to think in terms of remote eventualities, and when, in March, 1918, it became clear that the German Army intended to risk its all in a desperate attempt to break through our line, we took time by the forelock and set about creating a line of reserve trenches on which to fall back when the blow fell. Speaking rather superficially, we hastily scraped out these reserve trenches in the soil of the Somme uplands, where another nation similarly situated would (something seems to tell us) have conjured into being an elaborate conglomeration of ferro-concrete gun-pits and bullet-proof steel machine-gun emplacements, interlinked by subterranean passages and sunk to ground-level.

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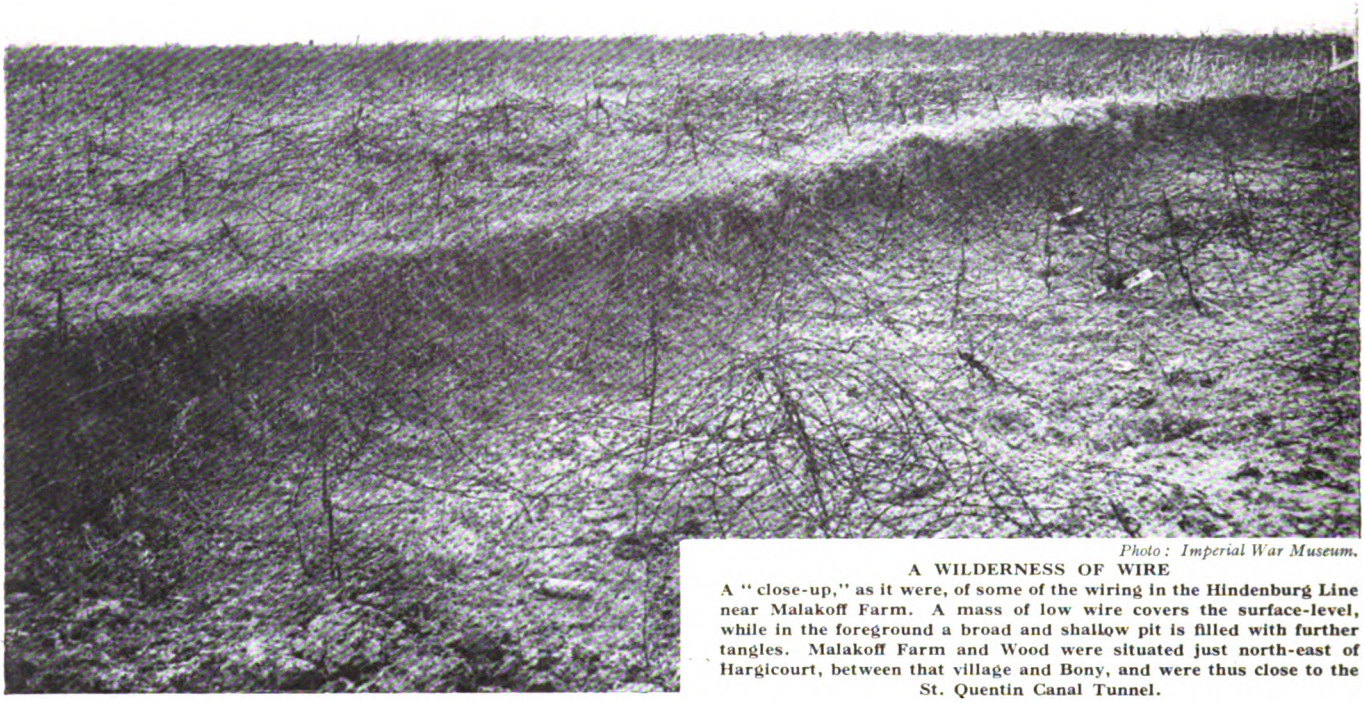

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A WILDERNESS OF WIRE

A "close-up," as it were, of some of the wiring in the Hindenburg Line near Malakoff Farm. A mass of low wire covers the surface-level, while in the foreground a broad and shallow pit is filled with further tangles. Malakoff Farm and Wood were situated just north-east of Hargicourt, between that village and Bony, and were thus close to the St. Quentin Canal Tunnel.

NO WIRE, BUT STILL A WILDERNESS

This view shows typical country in the Malakoff area. Wood and Farm were attacked, during the storming of the Hindenburg Line by the Fourth Army, on September 18th, 1918. As with most of the districts in the region of the tunnel, the Australians took the lion's share in the work of capture. Earlier in the War, the British had stormed the farm on August 26th, 1917.

Photo: Keystone.

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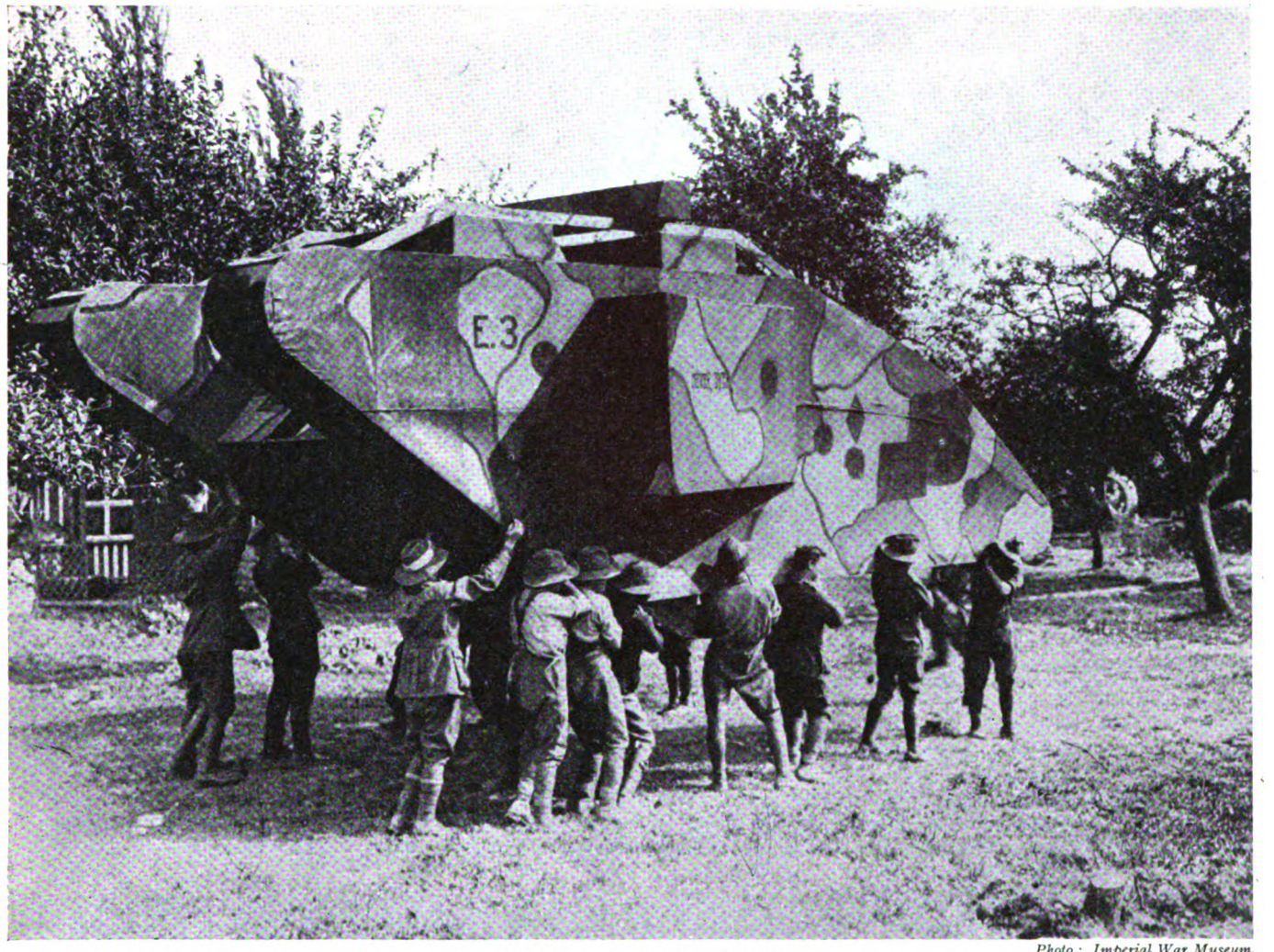

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NOT A FEAT OF STRENGTH

First the dummy tree, and now the dummy tank. This amusing and yet highly realistic weapon was extraordinarily effective on numerous occasions during the later phases of the War. The specimen shown here, "Never Dyer" by name, is being moved on the shoulders of a party of Australian 4th Divisional Engineers at Le Catelet during September, 1918. The device of "faking" as a species of camouflage was also frequently adopted by the navies of both sides—an example being the dummy fourth funnel added to the famous *Emden* at the beginning of her War exploits.

We must not forget, on the other hand, that it was never our intention to let the end of the War come to us on the Somme: a circumstance in which there lies, perhaps, much food for thought. And, when all is said and done, exactly how much did the Hindenburg Line profit its creators?

In a small *café*, not many kilometres from Havrincourt, an English visitor recently entered into conversation with a young French officer, who, as a lieutenant in an artillery regiment, had "made" the first part of his compulsory military service in the underground ramifications of the Maginot Line.

The best and most interesting conversations generally take place in the close proximity of some form of refreshment; and in this case, as in many another, the Englishman had called a halt with a view to seeking his midday meal in the only visible establishment catering for such necessities. The answer to his enquiry had been that a meal could be had, provided he did not object to sharing one in course of preparation for the son of the house and one other *monsieur*, a friend of the family. One of the national customs of the country being that everyone eats and drinks with no matter whom else, the Englishman hastened to assure Madame that nothing would please him more than to avail himself of the offer, provided, for his part, that his presence would not upset in any way the routine of the establishment.

Hindenburg *versus* Maginot

The conversation above referred to was in full swing within less than fifteen minutes from that moment, and the crushing of lettuce-leaves and the rattling of knives and forks bridged the rare silences as the relative merits of the Hindenburg and Maginot Lines were passed under review. The French officer knew nothing of the Hindenburg Line, of which he had heard but vaguely, and the Englishman spoke of the Maginot Line with equal inerudition, so that between the two (the third member of the party knew nothing whatsoever of either Line, and cared as little) some very sage conclusions were arrived at.

The Englishman's view, reduced to the dimensions of an epigram, was that what Man had made Man was able to unmake; the Frenchman's, based upon the tradition which has grown up around it, was that the Maginot Line was impregnable because it had been designed to be so. The point which the Englishman tried to make in

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

INSERTING A MESSAGE

An interesting close-up of a messenger-dog in the act of receiving the message which he is to convey. The small metal cylinder, attached to the animal's collar, is shown with its lid off, and the all-important piece of paper about to be put into it. This photograph was taken at Étaples on August 28th, 1918.

support of his view was that the Germans, in 1916-1917, had done exactly what the French of the "Now" period had done—that is to say, they had weighed most carefully in the balance every possible weapon known or suspected to be available to the enemy, before placing their faith in a system of fortified trench-lines that they well knew represented the very best which brain could devise or money buy. Also, that if the Hindenburg Line failed in its object when put to the test, there was no earthly reason for expecting another, similar line to withstand a test which would in all probability prove just as exacting.

You see, the Hindenburg Line relied, first and foremost, upon mass. There was nothing really new in its make-up. Concrete strong-points, although employed here in greater numbers than before, and grouped together, had been used already. The trenches themselves were on a larger scale; but they were still trenches, a prey to well-directed shell-fire. In front of these works was the usual wire; but it was wire in mass, deep banks of impassable stuff through which in due course the British artillery was to carve lanes that allowed our infantry to pass through unhindered—or nearly so—and through which British tanks were to find no great difficulty in rolling into action. The Line was admirably sited; but then the Germans could always be relied upon to choose their battle-positions with foresight and skill.

Crossing the Once "Uncrossable"

It is in many ways a lasting pity that to-day one passes from, say, Bapaume to Cambrai, without realising that in doing so one has crossed that barrier which not so very long ago was considered—and quite justifiably—to be uncrossable. With a wartime map on one's knees, and a keen eye on the retreating fields, one *might* be able to recognise the former line; but it would require sharp eyesight. However, it is a different matter if one leaves the broad highway, and wanders afoot across the fields; but even then one will require maps—and not motoring-maps. In this connection, no better map is to be found anywhere than the French 1/80,000, "hachured" map. This may be purchased, quite cheaply, at any good-class stationer's in France. The sheets do not cover much country, and several are required to cope with a day's motoring. During the War, many a British officer augmented by means of these sheets his knowledge of the sector in which he had to serve; and in cases of doubtful spelling there exists nothing so reliable. The draughtsmanship of these maps is exquisite; solitary trees, in places, may be identified, and every twist in the roads is reproduced with extraordinary fidelity.

While on this subject, it may be helpful to those who intend to pay a visit to the Western Front to know that the British Legion Headquarters issue a most valuable little collection of maps,

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A LANCASHIRE LAD

Here is a portrait of one whose name unfortunately is no longer upon record—the trench messenger-dog of the 5th Manchesters when they were stationed at Cuinchy at the beginning of 1918. Perhaps some reader of *Twenty Years After* will recognise this bow-wow, and remember his title. Alsatians, collies, and mongrels of similar build were the breeds commonly used for Army work.

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printed as a pamphlet. They take the form of sketches of the various important sectors, with plans of the principal towns interposed. Cemeteries and memorials are shown in their relation to the various means of access, and most of the wartime place-names find a mention.

Then there are the guides, of course, such as Muirhead's excellent little series; and these contain sectional and other maps which should meet the requirements of the majority. They also contain valuable monographs dealing with the operations in each sector. But to the contemplating visitor to France and Flanders, no better advice can be given than: "Let there be maps, and maps in plenty!" The memory of Man is fickle, and it is apt to be unsatisfying if the oldest member of the party pauses on (for example) the outskirts of Metz-en-Couture, and announces in a loud voice:

"I say, children, this is the spot where I captured the Saxon battalion staff—unless it was over yonder. It's impossible to say for certain from this map. . . ."

As sure as fate, some youngster will tell him that both spots were in our own lines on the alleged date. And the rest of the trip will be miserable for him.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IT'S A LONG, LONG TRAIL—

But in this case the trail is to be *un*wound. Those about to set forth with the reel of cable are Australian Engineers, and their job is to lay a telephone-line on Westhoek Ridge during the Battle of Polygon Wood, September 26th—October 3rd, 1917. Westhoek had been captured by the British on August 10th.

Two Sorts of Young Man

Speaking of youngsters, it must not be supposed that all the young men of to-day occupy their leisure by studying the history of the War which filled so much of their seniors' lives. There are very many, as we know, who do so, and to some purpose. The author has in mind one adolescent who is a veritable mine of information on the subject. This youth has made so close a study of the late War that he would look surprised if reminded that during the period 1914–1918 he was attending prep-school; for in his present-day imagination he was miles away from any school in those adventurous years, and when not serving afloat in the icy wastes of the North Sea, he was supernavigating the Western Front in a single-seater fighter aeroplane, or grappling with fear in a company-commander's dug-out on the eve of the German Offensive. . . .

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LAYING A CABLE

A cable being laid below-ground, in wooden cases, by the Army Signal Service. The principal signal companies with the original B.E.F. in 1914 had been the G.H.Q. Signal Company and Wireless Section, the corps and divisional signal companies, the cavalry signal squadrons and troops, and one signal company for lines of communication. As the Army as a whole grew, each new army, corps, and division was provided with a signal company.

In his case, the War is an essential feature of a life which only began properly after the War itself had ceased to be. To another class of young man, by contrast, the War of 1914–1918 is something entirely unknown, and—who shall deny it?—regrettably uninteresting. Quite recently, a certain Government department in London was approached by a member of the latter class of semi-juvenile, who sought over the telephone to obtain on behalf of his employers, the editors of a leading newspaper, some information concerning an important operation of the war-period. The following astonishing conversation took place:

Young Man: "Hullo! Is that the —— —— Department? This is

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the *Daily Blank* newspaper speaking. We are anxious to obtain certain details concerning the Battle of 9a-3a. Could you tell us where we could get this information ? "

Government Official : " I am afraid I did not catch the name of the battle. Would you mind repeating it ? "

Y. M. : " Oh, sorry ! The Battle of 9a-3a."

G. O. : " Nine-A Three-A ? Whatever do you mean ? "

Y. M. : " Yes, that's it—— the Battle of Nine-A—Three-A. It was in Palestine, or somewhere near there. Nine-A—Three-A."

G. O. (moved by a flash of genius) : " Do you by any chance mean GAZA ? "

Y. M. : " Perhaps you are right. The note I have here looks more like 9-A—3-A, though. But it *might* be what you said. . . ."

The Empty Canal du Nord

It may be a far cry from Gaza, and the homeric battles which made that place famous, to the waterless Canal du Nord about Havrincourt ; but there is something about the empty chasm which runs north-eastward across the former Hindenburg Line, between Hermies and Havrincourt itself, that seems to inspire one with thoughts of a remote past, exactly as does the mention of the Philistine city here linked with it. Perhaps it is because one comes upon this chasm so suddenly, from whichever direction one approaches it ; or it may be because of its depth and vast emptiness ; or, again, it may be because of its associations.

Just to the west of the Canal, the railway and road, which cross the ravine side-by-side by separate bridges, intersect. Precisely which is to blame, it would be difficult to say ; suffice it to record that, as neither cedes ground to the other, their meeting takes the form of a level-crossing. On the occasion of a visit now in mind, the " barber's poles " were in the horizontal position, and nothing would induce Madame in charge of the apparatus to raise the barrier until the train that had just been signalled should have passed outside her responsibility.

There was, on the other hand, no objection to a foot-passenger slipping through, provided he did not dally to pick flowers (of which there were several varieties visible) on the railway track while so doing. So over one went, and almost immediately was hushed by the grandeur of the scene which confronted him. The canal-bed, far below the bridge, was as dry as the proverbial bone. Unless I am greatly mistaken, water

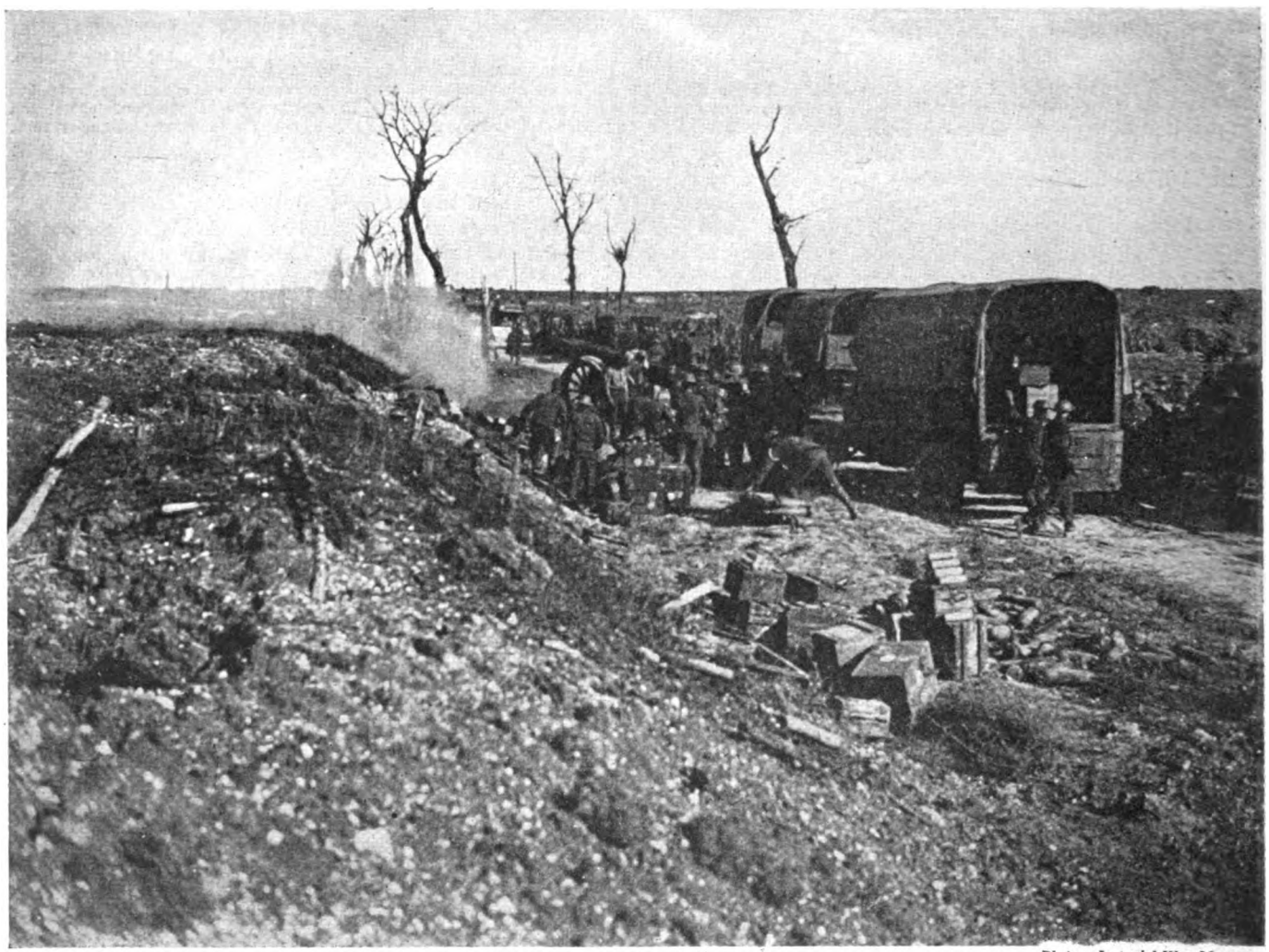

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

ON THE ARRAS—CAMBRAI ROAD

Yet another famous highway of the War, as it looked Then and as it looks Now, is shown in these two photographs. Arras and Cambrai are 35 km. apart, and the section illustrated is in the region of Tilloy-lez-Mofflaines, a few kilometres out of Arras. Shells are seen in the course of being unloaded from motor-lorries behind a 60-pounder battery (which is in action) on August 26th, 1918. The attack launched here during the last week of August, 1918, was the work of the Canadian Corps of the First Army, and of part of the Third Army.

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Photo : Keystone.

STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW

Like many a neighbouring highway, the Arras—Cambrai road is dead-straight for the whole of its length. The Canadian Corps, at the time of the attack in late August, 1918, comprised the 2nd and 3rd Canadian and 51st Divisions, and was the extreme right-hand corps of the First Army, carrying out its programme in close co-operation with the left of the Third Army. It was this advance which, by pushing forward our line north and south of the Scarpe, brought us within striking-distance of the celebrated Drocourt—Quéant Switch. The switch-line was broken on September 2nd.

has never yet flowed down there. On either side, the steep brick walls rose sheer from the bed in a series of clear-cut steps ; and on either side, too, the brick-work bore the untouched traces of shell-fire, so that one could picture the flying masonry as the direct hits registered themselves, each shell skimming the top of the opposing bank in its plunging flight.

Where Shells Lie Embedded

Here and there deep holes, large enough to admit a human body, spoke of projectiles which had entered without exploding, to bury themselves several feet deep in the earth behind the brick-work. On the bed itself the rubble from this shelling still lay undisturbed, and, a yard or two to one side of the present bridges, the shattered anchorages of the original structures remained, wan and desolate—like stumps of teeth in the jaw of a giant.

The new bridges are sound enough in all conscience ; but the depth of the ravine, and the sweep of it as it swings westward out of sight to the south, make one want to grip the balustrading—and on this occasion, at any rate, the balustrading was firmly gripped.

An impression of a different kind, although of equal strength, awaits the pilgrim who journeys on, south-eastward to where the Canal de St. Quentin passes out of sight under the high ground below Le Catelet. Here, it is no longer the immensity of the scene that registers itself upon the mind, but the tranquillity, the utter peacefulness of what was once one of the most battle-riven points on the Western Front. There is no directional movement visible in the peculiarly green waters of this canal, and yet they are forever moving—talking amongst themselves, it would seem—rising and sinking to the accompaniment of *sotto-voce* cadences as they come into contact with, or subside from, the projecting concrete kerbs.

It is hard to realise that the mouth of the tunnel into which the canal disappears not so very long ago gave shelter to hundreds of German troops and access to a warren of intricate passages, communicating as required with the Hindenburg trench-system that passed overhead. To-day all this has been swept away ; at least, all that might meet the roving eye. Without let or hindrance, one may penetrate the tunnel, walking softly along the lichen-covered, slippery tow-path. In the roof electric lamps hang at intervals, so that the passage, though sombre, is never dark.

Mysterious Closed Doors

Here and there one encounters fastened doors in the wall ; and one meditates as to whether German dug-outs still lie beyond these doors, or whether

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they have long since—or perhaps recently—been filled in.

The thoroughness with which the German Command planned the Hindenburg Line is perhaps nowhere more clearly shown than at the southern extremity of the system, where its creators without hesitation showed their willingness to sacrifice, if need be, the important city of St. Quentin, by utilising the natural advantages of its situation and making it a part of the great defensive work.

To appreciate this properly, the visitor should contrive to spend some time in St. Quentin, and get to know the town so well that he can visualise it with the majority of its houses razed to the ground. To those with experience in these matters, a brief superficial survey may be adequate; but it is sometimes difficult to see the wood for the trees, and there are many Londoners who, though they walk there almost daily, fail to notice the dip in the Strand or the hill in Piccadilly. The town of St. Quentin is draped neatly over a quite tall hillock, three-quarters of it declining toward the south-east.

A more natural *place forte* it would be difficult to find, and one can imagine the director of artillery in this sector rubbing his hands with delight at the thought of the ease with which the siting of his guns and howitzers would be arranged. Here was an Ypres, with its salient, clearly defined, surrounding the town, and yet with none of Ypres's drawbacks. Here, it would be the attacker who would be pried upon by day and by night, and not the hapless occupier of the salient.

He Stood While it was Worth it

Strange, is it not, that with this ponderous weighting of the scales in his favour, the enemy should have been compelled to give way when it came to the final test. . . . Although we must not forget that he stood his ground here up to the time when the rot set in and it no longer mattered very much whether he remained or went.

Of the town itself there is little to be said to-day. Its very fine "Basilique," named after the saint who gives the town its title, suffered a considerable amount of damage from shell fire, and is not yet completely restored. Here and there, in unsuspected places, the visitor will come across walls still bearing traces of shrapnel and high-explosive.

He may perhaps seek enlightenment from some passing native—as like as not one of those ageless French postmen who are ever delivering letters at all times of the day. The postman will stop, momentarily interrupting a diligent search through the card-index in the ingenious box-haversack that he carries suspended by a broad strap from his neck. He will half-close the lid (for the mail, the world over, is a trust that nothing must betray), glance at the marks on the brickwork, and give expression to one word and one word only; for to a Frenchman every shell that ever left the muzzle of a gun belongs to the same family, a family bearing the surname: "Schrapnel"—always spelled as though its originator hailed from beyond the Rhine.

The most extensively reconstructed part of St. Quentin is that which lies in the neighbourhood of the station. Here all appears to be brand new, and certainly in its railway headquarters St. Quentin has done itself very proudly indeed. The bridge carrying the main road to the south across the lines at this point is, to say the least, imposing, and from it the main street runs steeply up to the centre of the city—the hill providing a check on speed, which is just as well, for at the top the narrow road twists first one way and then the other.

St. Quentin and Cambrai

In this respect St. Quentin resembles Cambrai; but Cambrai is more compact, although its Grand Place is huge, whereas St. Quentin's is confined and diminutive. Had the former not been planned to run downward on a westerly slope, it is conceivable that it, also, might have been called to serve as a strong-point in the Hindenburg Line, instead of remaining some five miles behind it: in which event there might have been even less of it left standing when it passed into our hands during the last months of the War. That it was in flames on that occasion was, however, no fault of the Hindenburg lay-out.

But to-day, here also, all that is ancient history, and the returning warrior may refresh himself with those peculiar cushion-shaped peppermints known as Cambrai Follies (*Bêtises de Cambrai*) which made the town famous long before the Canadians marched in, just as though their manufacture had gone on without pause for more than twenty years. One wonders whether the Germans appreciated those peppermints. . . .

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CAMBRAI: THE LAST PHASE

A graphic photograph of an incident during the Canadian capture of Cambrai on October 9th, 1918. While the town still burns furiously, Canadian soldiers set out across the smoke-ridden square. Cambrai had been in German hands ever since the invaders' rout of the French Territorial garrison during the second half of August, 1914. This garrison had consisted mainly of elderly "C3" soldiers, and was entirely without artillery.

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CHAPTER LXXIV

FRANCE IN EARLY 1918

The opening weeks of the year 1918 were, for the Allies, fraught with anxiety. For one thing, counsels upon many important matters were divided, and there was, in the case of this country, a lack of accord between the politicians and the soldiers which might have had serious consequences. The concluding year of the Great War was, as one would have expected, by far the most dramatic, and it is therefore important to understand clearly the many intricate problems confronting those responsible for our policy at that time.

As the echoes of Cambrai died down, the memories of its resounding joybells, its triumphant vindication of the tank, and its gloomy finale, were swept away by the march of greater events. France had not recovered either from the mutinies of her troops or the deep despondency of her people. Italy, stricken by the consequences of Caporetto, had become for the moment rather a liability than an asset. Britain, whose vitality had been drained by "the long agony of Passchendaele," had to carry the main burden of the War by land and sea.

Americans in the Offing

On the other hand, there were factors in favour of the Allies. The submarine menace, though still grave, was yielding to new methods of treatment; the tread of American legions could be faintly heard; and, through eastern windows, light was streaming in from Baghdad and Gaza.

Robertson was gravely disturbed by prospects in Russia. Ever since May 1917, he had been urging upon the Government, though without response, the need of facing squarely up to the issues involved therein. At first sight, it might seem sound policy to remain on the defensive in 1918, and to strike in 1919 with the added strength of the American Army. But, as Robertson wrote in November, 1917, "it would pay the enemy to deprive us of the opportunity and try to get a decision in 1918. He would, if the Entente were visibly on the defensive, be able to deal with us as and where he wished."

The conclusion which the Field-Marshal reached was that we must continue to exercise pressure, both to prevent the initiative passing to the enemy, and to aggravate the economic distress of Germany. But to effect these objects we must have the necessary strength. Even if Russia should remain in the War, Germany might be able to withdraw 30 divisions from her Eastern front. Then, with France a wasting asset and with Italy a permanent liability, the Allies would be inferior on the Franco-Belgian front by 50 divisions as compared with the previous year. Moreover, our own Army was already 100,000 below establishment, and, owing to winter wastage, would by April 1918 need 225,000 more men than were in prospect under the existing conditions of recruitment.

The measures he proposed were, in the first place, to reduce our distant commitments—Salonica, Palestine, Mesopotamia: a policy which, incidentally, would have the important effect of freeing shipping for the transport of the American divisions; and, in the second place, to develop our resources of manpower more efficiently.

Haig's Demands

Haig supported Robertson; and for the proposed offensive he made categorical demands. They were that he should keep his 62 divisions, drafted up to establishment, and with reinforcements in France for the replacement of wastage; that he should not be required to take over more line from the French; and, finally, that the War Cabinet should have firm faith in the possibility of success on the Western Front and concentrate on seeking it.

Some of these proposals were highly controversial. All through the War the "Westerner" continued to say—"Beat the Germans, and the rest will follow," while the "Easterner" preferred to knock away the props from under Germany, outflank her, and enter by back-doors. The "Westerner" urged that the security of Britain should have precedence over all other considerations; upon which the "Easterner" would enquire as to the full implications of the word security. And so the argument would rage.

It is impossible to label one view right and the other wrong. Much depended on the emergence of opportunities, and the conditions under which they might be seized. The fact that the Prime Minister was an "Easterner," and that his principal military advisers were "Westerners," rendered the problem specially thorny of solution.

Then there was the question of manpower. Lloyd George was the trustee of the nation. He had seen no falling off of enemy strength during the bloodbaths of the Somme and Passchendaele. On the contrary, he had watched Roumania being swallowed up during the period of the former, and contemporaneously with the latter he had been shocked to find that the German reserve, which should have been absorbed by British pressure, was overwhelming the Russians at Riga and the Italians at Caporetto. To a brilliant, imaginative Celt, "slogging-matches" were repellent, as was the long process of attrition, which, though certainly expensive, was questionably successful. He believed that some other road to victory could be found, and did not wish to see his precious last remainder staked "to gain the next shell-shattered hill-top."

A Perilous Choice

His correct course, having lost faith in Haig and Robertson, was to dismiss them. But he was uncertain of his power when opposed to soldiers so high in the popular esteem. He therefore took the perilous middle course of retaining them in their appointments, while refusing the demands made by them to meet the military situation.

Another controversial matter was the request that we should extend our line to the south. The French held a front of 325 miles, ourselves one of 100 miles. Our Allies had 972 battalions in the line, and we had 806, the mileage corresponding to which should have been 235 and 190. But length of front was only one of many factors to be considered. The British sector was close to the Channel Ports, the possession of which by Germany would have gravely endangered our sea-power, and with it the very foundations of Allied strength.

The narrow space between this front

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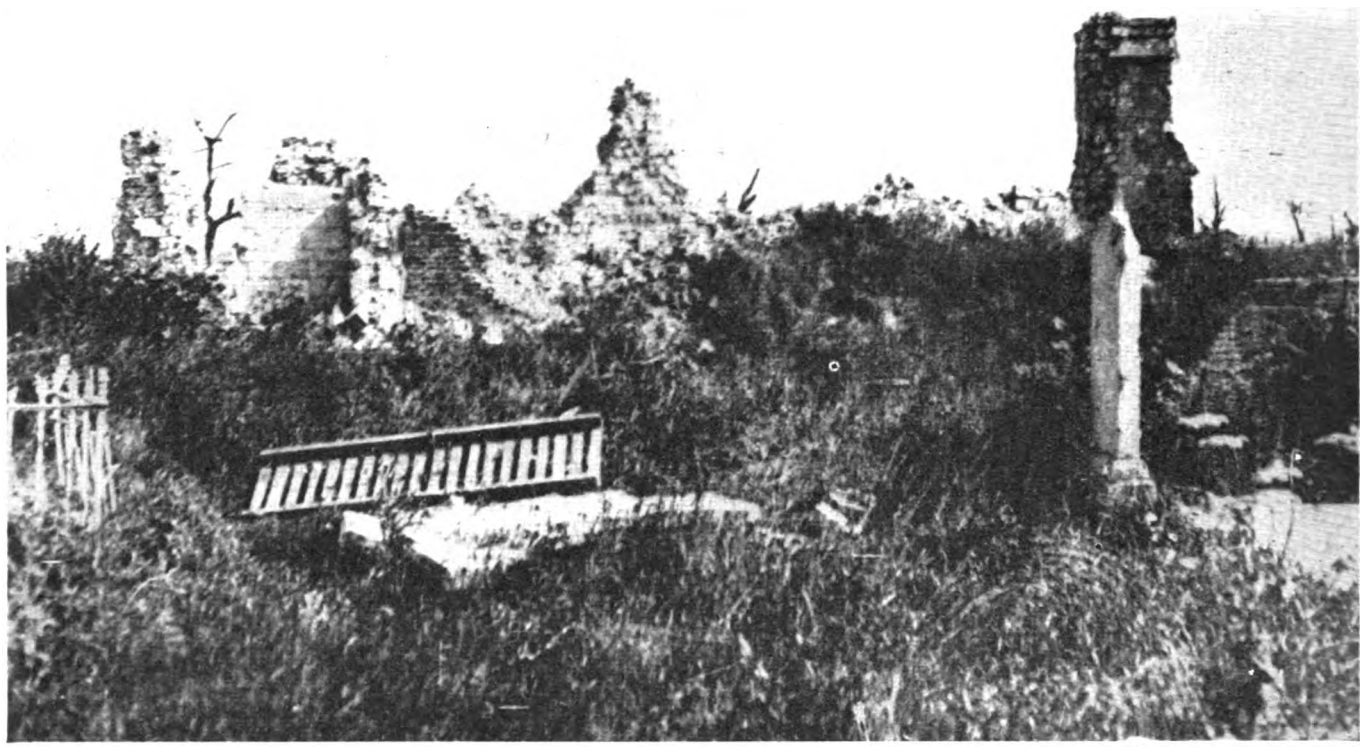

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RUINS OF A CHURCH

The church is that of Vermandovillers, and is shown as it appeared on July 12th, 1917. This village lies 3 km. south of the Amiens—St. Quentin road, and about the same distance north-north-east of Chaulnes. It stands at a junction of rural roads, these leading severally to Foucaucourt and Bray-sur-Somme, Estrées-Deniécourt, Ablaincourt, Lihons and Rosières, and Chaulnes itself. Vermandovillers therefore lies very much in the country of "First Somme" and of the March Retreat; and such War history as it possesses belongs almost wholly to 1916 and 1918.

and the sea was congested with all our stores and establishments. In it, there was no room to manœuvre, no space to retrieve mistakes. Moreover, throughout 1916 and 1917, the British, more aggressive in their actions than the French, had retained on their short front nearly half the German divisions, and those the best. So quiet, indeed, were parts of the French front, that away to the south 140 battalions were able to hold a stretch of 150 miles.

The subject, however, was causing considerable ill-feeling; for, in the uninstructed popular mind, the criterion was the proportion of miles to numbers. Clemenceau even threatened to resign unless some steps were taken to adjust the existing disparity. Eventually, after much bargaining, Haig agreed with Pétain to take over fresh ground past St. Quentin to Barisis—a distance of some 25 miles.

The subject was discussed at a meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet on the 11th October. There were four possible courses: (*a*) to accept Haig's views, (*b*) to concentrate on the Western Front, but not to withdraw forces from other theatres, (*c*) to accept the French plan, namely, to stand wholly on the defensive, awaiting the effect of economic pressure on the enemy and the arrival of the American troops, and (*d*) to destroy severally and successively Germany's weaker allies—the props.

Turkish Scheme Discarded

The Prime Minister suggested that the last course mentioned should be adopted, and strongly urged that a strenuous endeavour should be made to inflict a decisive defeat on Turkey. An enquiry from Allenby, however, elicited a demand of 13 divisions for this purpose, the transport of which, according to naval calculations, would take 200 days, would dislocate Mediterranean traffic, would entail a severe reduction of food-imports, and would seriously interfere with the transport of American troops. The proposal was therefore discarded, and no further decision reached for the moment.

In the meantime, the disaster at Caporetto entailed the despatch of 5 British and 6 French divisions to Italy, much against the will of the British Command, which rightly urged that the correct *riposte* was to make the blow then about to be struck at Cambrai as effective as possible.

Shortly afterwards, Haig discovered, from figures supplied by the War

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Office, that his existing shortage in infantry would rise to 250,000 by the 31st March, and to 460,000 by the 31st October. He at once informed the War Office that this would entail the breaking-up of 15 divisions in order to bring the remainder up to establishment; and at the same time, he expressed a strong objection to any change in the composition and organisation of the division.

About this time, the Supreme War Council was inaugurated. It consisted of the Prime Ministers (or their representatives) of the principal Allied Powers, and was to be the "deciding authority on military policy and the strategic distribution of the Allied forces between the various theatres of war." It was assisted by "permanent military representatives," who were to study the War as a whole and advise the Council as to the strategy to be adopted.

Weygand, Wilson, Bliss and Diaz were to be the French, British, American and Italian "representatives" respectively. At a session of the Council on December 1st, there was much talk and little action. The general trend was, however, again towards an attempt to destroy Turkey; and it seemed most unlikely that the advice given by Haig and Robertson would be accepted.

A Defensive Policy

The British Commander-in-Chief therefore came to the conclusion that the initiative would almost certainly pass to the Germans, and he resigned himself accordingly to the adoption of a defensive policy. On December 3rd, he assembled his Army commanders and informed them to that effect.

For more than two years—Neuve Chapelle, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Passchendaele, Cambrai—the energies of the British Army had been devoted to the offensive. The front held was, therefore, by no means well-adapted to meet a powerful and sustained attack. The trenches merely marked the limits of successful advances, and their general pattern, being fortuitous, was without tactical design. They were, moreover, of an elementary nature and weakly constructed, having been seized, dug, and enlarged under fire.

Something very much stronger and better planned was now needed, rather of the type of the deep fortified systems, such as the Hindenburg Line, constructed by the Germans. Once Haig had given the word, therefore, the whole Army had to get to work with spade, pick, and shovel.

Then training had to be considered. The New Armies, of which the bulk of the British force was now composed, had, in their comparatively short term of existence, been prepared specially for attack. Education in defensive operations was therefore needed. "Training in the conduct of a retreat, and of a retreat extending over many days, never entered anyone's mind." [1]

The troops also required rest. They were desperately tired after a long series of attacks against fortified positions, usually executed under the most trying conditions. All this entrenching, training, and rest would require a skilful organisation of time and labour, if the front were to be rendered reasonably secure by the early spring, at which time the enemy might be expected to launch an offensive.

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 39.

Close of the Eastern Campaign

On December 15th, an armistice was signed on the Eastern Front, and from that date Russia had to be considered as out of the War. For the moment, indeed, her vast granaries were needed to save Austria from starvation and Germany from serious want. Accordingly, a line 1,500 miles long, from the

Photo: G. T. Watson.

TALL AND IMPOSING

Vermandovillers church as to-day finds it. The village originally came into Allied hands when captured by the French on September 17th, 1916, after part of it had been held by them since the 4th. The British 8th Division, XIX Corps, retired through it on March 26th, 1918; and the eventual recapture took place on August 27th, 1918. Vermandovillers was then almost on the boundary between the British and French fronts.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WHERE VERMANDOVILLERS USED TO LIE

Taken on the same date as the War photograph of the ruined church, this view shows all that remained of the rest of the village. In July, 1916, the Germans had occupied a very strong line hereabouts, running from Estrées-Deniécourt to Deniécourt Château—converted into a strong fortress—and thence by Soyécourt and the Bois de l'Etoile to Hill 90, just north-west of Vermandovillers.

MEMORIAL IN VERMANDOVILLERS

The purpose of the French in assaulting Vermandovillers in July, 1916, was to enlarge the dangerous salient which had formed south of the Somme owing to the slow progress north of the river. But although, on July 20th, every other objective in this area was taken, the village held out, and remained in German hands until it fell, half at a time, during the following September.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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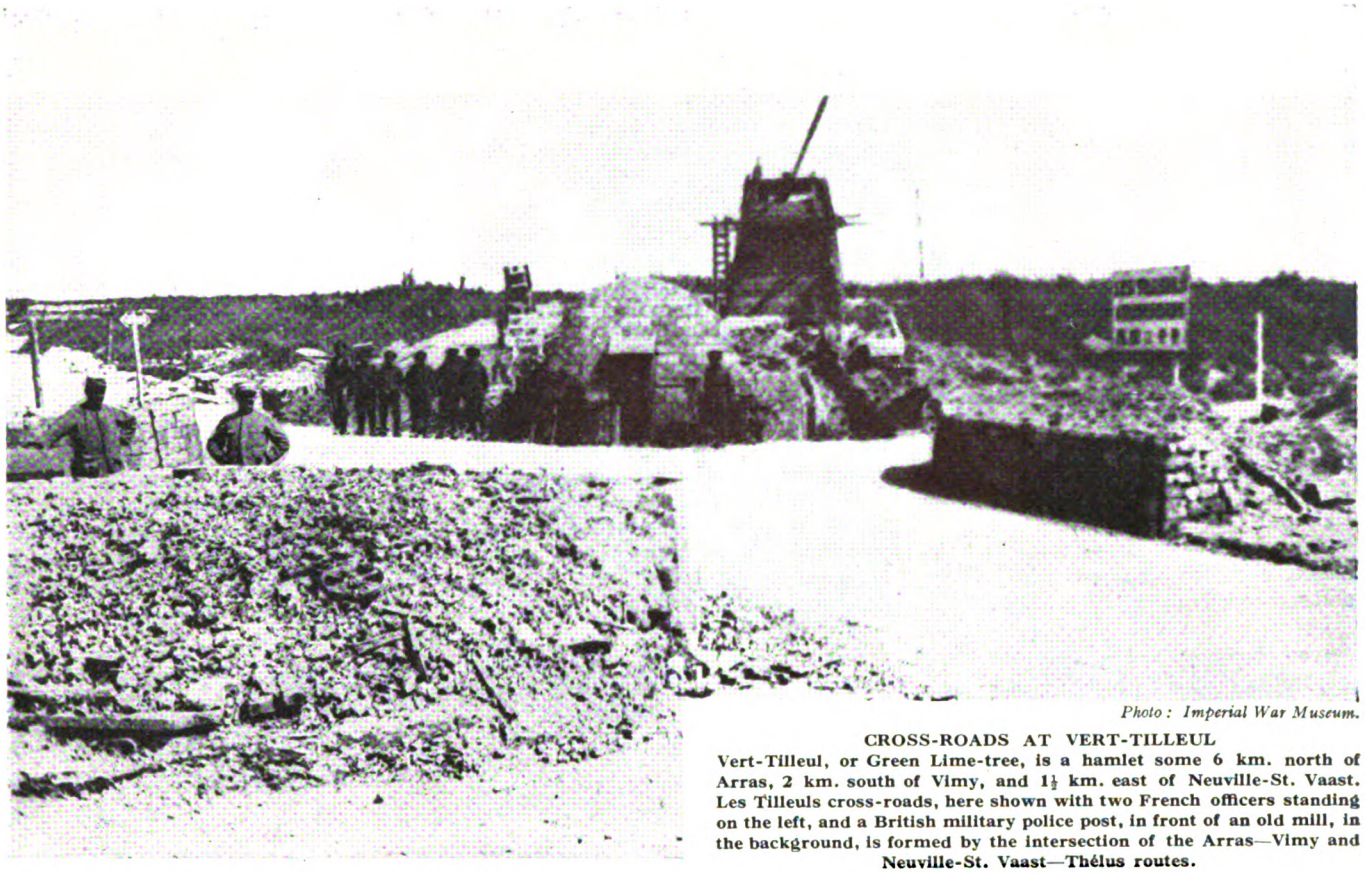

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

CROSS-ROADS AT VERT-TILLEUL

Vert-Tilleul, or Green Lime-tree, is a hamlet some 6 km. north of Arras, 2 km. south of Vimy, and 1½ km. east of Neuville-St. Vaast. Les Tilleuls cross-roads, here shown with two French officers standing on the left, and a British military police post, in front of an old mill, in the background, is formed by the intersection of the Arras—Vimy and Neuville-St. Vaast—Thélus routes.

AN INTERESTING MONUMENT

The memorial here seen, which is dedicated to Canadian fallen, is none other than the old mill of War days, skilfully converted. Vert-Tilleul was carried by troops of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions on the morning of April 9th, 1917. In the centre of the Canadian attack was the British 13th Brigade, 5th Division, which helped to overcome stern opposition east of the village.

Photo : G. T. Watson.

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Sea of Azov to the Gulf of Finland, was occupied by the Germans to cover the necessary requisitions. It was held by 49 (later by 26) weak divisions of 2nd line troops. The remainder of the Eastern Army was transferred to the Western Front: 80,000 picked men from formations left behind, and 34 complete divisions.

The only serious fighting during this period was the struggle which took place in the Flesquières salient at the end of December.

Here the Germans, their leading waves dressed in white to match the snow-covered ground, made a determined attempt to retake Welsh Ridge. This feature was part of the spoils of the first battle of Cambrai, and was held by the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division.

After a heavy bombardment, the enemy attacked along the whole front, and succeeded in wresting portions of the forward line from the defenders. The 'Hood' Battalion, by an immediate and resolute counter-attack, regained all the ground it had lost; and the 'Howe,' which had been driven off an important part of the crest, would have done likewise, had not an all-too-lucky shell blown in battalion headquarters and prevented the quick action needed.

After dusk, however, a very carefully organised operation, for which the 'Anson' Battalion, supported by portions of the 'Nelson' and the 'Drake,' was mainly responsible, restored the situation. Elsewhere, our counter-attacks failed; but we managed to hold the principal feature, and were nowhere driven out of our second line.

The battle raged, attack and counter-attack following each other in quick succession, from dawn on the 30th to noon on the 31st, when the Germans drew off.

The Royal Naval Division thoroughly deserved the praise given to it by the Commander-in-Chief for its valorous defence. But its casualties amounted to 1,400 men, and included some fine leaders, who could ill be spared.

Discussion on Man-power

Early in January, 1918, a Cabinet Committee on man-power was appointed to estimate our resources in relation to commitments, and to advise upon their apportionment. It took the view that the British Empire had now to bear the chief burden in keeping command of the sea, in transportation, coal-supply, munitions, and finance. Consequently, it suggested the following order of priority in regard to the distribution of available man-power: fighting requirements in Navy and Air-Force; shipbuilding and construction of aircraft and tanks;

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ST. LAURENT-BLANGY CHURCH

With St. Laurent-Blangy village—if village it can be called, which is now part and parcel of Arras—we have already dealt; here, chiefly on account of the fine and very unusual modern specimen, we illustrate the former and present-day churches. The above photograph of the old church was taken on June 30th, 1917, and the healing hand of Nature little disguises the havoc previously wrought upon the building. Readers may be reminded that St. Laurent-Blangy fell to the 9th Division on April 9th, 1917.

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food-production; timber-felling and last, presumably, though not mentioned, the "P.B. Army."

This plan meant that the Minister of National Defence would be able to find only about 100,000 out of the 615,000 men demanded by the B.E.F. for 1918. The Committee contained no soldier, but took upon itself to recommend, in direct opposition to Haig's wishes, that divisions should be reduced and reorganised on a 9- instead of 12-battalion basis; also, it declared the estimates of wastage prepared by the Army Council to be excessive; and it considered that losses could be reduced and strength conserved by standing on the defensive, and by the "adoption of suitable tactics and strategy." It formulated no proposals for reducing strength in minor theatres.

How faulty this reasoning was became evident when the crisis arose in March. It was then found both necessary and possible to despatch to France 500,000 men from England, and 150,000 from Italy and Egypt. But by that time disaster verging on national defeat had supervened.

A Prophetic Warning

The Army Council protested on many counts without effect, and closed its advice with the following prophetic warning:—

"There is every prospect of heavy fighting on the Western Front from February onwards, and the result may well be that even if the divisions successfully withstand the shock of the earlier attack, they may become so exhausted and attenuated as to be incapable of continuing the struggle until the Americans can effectually intervene. In short, the Council would regard the acceptance of the recommendations in the draft report, without further effort to provide the men they consider necessary . . . as taking *an unreasonably grave risk of losing the War and sacrificing to no purpose the British Army on the Western Front.*"[1]

In 1918, the capacity of an army for attack was closely related to the shell-tonnage of its gun-support. The artillery conquered the ground, the infantry occupied it. In defence, on the contrary, the backbone was furnished by infantry, especially by machine guns. Yet, precisely at the moment of our adoption of the defensive, the proportion of infantry to guns was reduced, and our power of defence consequently diminished.

[1] Author's italics.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A FINE PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE

There is something very airy and graceful about St. Laurent-Blangy's new church, with its open "lacework" spire, and similar decoration along the summit of the roof. The building is not on the site of its predecessor, but nearer the canal—a circumstance which considerably enhances its effectiveness when viewed from certain angles. The site of the old church is to-day occupied by the new "village" school.

160 battalions were selected for disbandment, amalgamation, or for conversion to pioneers. They were chosen from those most recently raised, yet there was much heartburning over the rupture of associations formed under strenuous yet vitalising conditions. Even more important were the dislocation, extra work, and additional rail-transport involved, at a period when every hour and every ounce of energy were precious. In the Fifth Army, the reorganisation was completed only on the 25th February, so that the troops had less than a month in which to accustom themselves to the new conditions and the new procedure before the great onslaught fell upon them.

The crux of the military situation lay in the question whether or not the Central Powers, profiting by the defection of Russia, would be able to achieve a decisive victory before the Americans arrived in sufficient numbers to turn the scale in favour of the Allies. Naturally, therefore, France and Britain made great efforts to render American help effective as soon as possible. At this time there were five American divisions in France, each some 25,000 strong; and monthly arrivals numbered 12,000.

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A Question of Prestige

The most urgent demand was for infantry. Haig and Pétain were therefore anxious to utilise such shipping as was available for bringing over separate battalions, leaving staffs, guns, and ancillary services to be transported later; and they wished to incorporate these battalions in their own brigades.

Pershing—the American commander-in-chief—preferred that his troops should fight under their own flag. The matter was long and hotly debated, for there was much to be said on both sides. Lloyd George regarded it as so urgent that, although Britain was already severely rationed, he offered to acquire, by a further curtailment of imports, enough shipping for the trans-oceanic transport of 144 unbrigaded battalions.

Pershing, however, would meet him only to the extent of bringing over divisions complete in personnel, but short of the greater part of their equipment. "It was hardly a generous assent to a generous offer"; but, apart from the objection of national pride, which was pressed largely by American politicians, Pershing did not believe the emergency to be as grave as represented by Robertson, and argued that "if the British were so short of men, why did they keep so many in Palestine?"[1] Actually, the agreed scheme had not begun to take effect by the 21st March; and, accordingly, not a single American battalion fought in the Allied ranks during the battle of St. Quentin.

"By that time, with careful prearrangement, between fifty and a hundred of such battalions might have been made available, and such a reinforcement might well have brought about the early collapse of the German attack. Pershing, if we read between the lines of his memoirs, seems subconsciously to have thought it more important that the American Army should fight as such than that the Allies should win the War.

"How far he would have been able to justify his action had the German attack succeeded (as it very nearly did) is difficult to judge, but he undoubtedly took a very grave risk for the sake of sentiment."[2]

Recommendations for the Year

Since their appointment, the principal military representatives, with a large staff at their disposal, had been busy at Versailles producing a series of joint notes, which for the most part were of an academic nature. Joint Note No. 12, dated January 21st, however, was important. It surveyed the whole field of operations, and made definite recommendations for the campaign of 1918.

These were, briefly, that the security of the Western Front was essential and that it might be assured provided (1) that it were considered, including the Italian front, "as a single strategic field of action"; (2) that the British and French forces were maintained at their existing aggregate—a condition which the authors of the note must have known could not be fulfilled in the prevailing political situation; and (3) that every effort were made to strengthen defences, furnish equipment, and improve communications.

The P.M.R.'s considered that there was no hope of the Allies being able to secure a favourable decision either in the West or in the Balkans in 1918. They therefore turned once more to the project of overwhelming Turkey, although such a scheme had been recently shown to be impracticable for the moment. It is interesting to note that, whereas they saw no prospect of an Allied victory before 1919, both Haig and Robertson had hopes that, if the first great hostile onslaught could be repulsed, the enemy might become demoralised by his failure and fall a prey to an Allied counter-stroke.

At the conference of the War Council which followed, Lloyd George strongly supported the plea for action against Turkey. This was a strange phenomenon in view of the emphasis he was laying on the need for the quick transport of American troops to France. For it was the importance and the scarcity of shipping which was turning every other "Easterner," except Sir Henry Wilson, into a "Westerner"—and this one exception changed over when he became C.I.G.S. and had to bear the responsibility of his opinions.

The Matter of Reserves

Joint Note No. 14 quickly followed No. 12, and was even more important. It advised the creation of a general reserve for the whole of the Western Front as a matter of great urgency.

Haig, Pétain, and Pershing met Foch and Robertson at Compiègne on January 23rd to discuss the two notes. "Haig and Pétain stated that they were keeping about one-third of their respective forces in reserve, that they had made careful arrangements for affording each other (or Italy) immediate assistance if required, and that they were organising local counter-attacks on their respective fronts for delivery in the event of a serious enemy offensive."[1]

Foch suggested a counter-attack on a large scale, whereupon Haig remarked, "Give us back the troops from Salonica [where there were still 300,000 men], and we will commence offensives."[2] Pétain, too, made clear that he had not enough troops for that purpose. "Haig laid particular stress on the vital need for maintaining British positions in the north, where his task was to cover the Channel ports and important coal-mines; and both he and Pétain said they must regard the American Army as the real reserve."[3]

But a reserve is only of value if ready to act; and at this point Pershing made clear that the Americans would not be ready. He indicated that they were suffering much from delays in French harbours and on French railways. Foch professed complete ignorance of these difficulties, whereupon Pétain interjected: "One should not wait until such things are brought to one's notice, but should look around and discover them."[4] The general tone of the meeting was, in fact, somewhat acid. (It is necessary to a general understanding of affairs to note that Clemenceau and Pétain both disliked Foch, and that Haig much preferred Pétain to him.)

"Curiouser and Curiouser"

The Italian situation was then discussed. As it was known that the German divisions had left Italy, the majority held the opinion that the British and French divisions there might be drawn into general reserve on the French side of the Franco-Italian frontier. Foch, however, "thought they should be left to train and reorganise the Italian Army until an attack in France on a big scale was clearly imminent."[5] This again was curious, as, owing to the weak railway communication between France and Italy, reinforcement by a single division would have taken 14 days—a fact which no one should have realised better than Foch. All signs, moreover, pointed to the maintenance by the enemy of a passive attitude in Italy, and Plumer had just reported that no hostile offensive was likely in that theatre.

The conference broke up without reaching any decisions. Here were five commanders, all of high reputations

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 65.
[2] Rowan-Robinson, *Belated Comments on a Great Event*, p. 34.

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 39.
[2] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 70.
[3] *Belated Comments*, p. 39.
[4] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 70.
[5] *Belated Comments*, p. 40.

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Specially drawn.

BADGES—SELECTION SEVEN

From left to right, row by row beginning at the top, the badges depicted are those of: 1—The Bedfordshire Regt. 2—The Leicestershire Regt. 3—The Royal Irish Regt. 4—Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regt. (The Green Howards). 5—The Lancashire Fusiliers. 6—The Royal Scots Fusiliers. 7—The Cheshire Regt. 8—The Royal Welsh Fusiliers. 9—The South Wales Borderers. 10—The King's Own Scottish Borderers. 11—The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). 12—The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 13—The Gloucestershire Regt. 14—The Worcestershire Regt. 15—The East Lancashire Regt. 16—The East Surrey Regt. 17—The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. 18—The Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regt. 19—The Border Regt. 20—The Royal Sussex Regt.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PATCHING UP A TRENCH

An infantry working-party is seen at work, under the Royal Engineers, on the task of repairing a thaw-damaged communication-trench recently taken over from the French 6th Division. The picture comes from near Essigny, the infantry units concerned being of the 108th Brigade, 36th Division. The date is February 7th, 1918.

richly deserved. Yet their arguments, based on a parochial outlook, were trumpery to a degree. "Any one of the party would have torn them to shreds if, as a supreme commander, he had viewed the wide field of war without prejudice."[1]

The Supreme War Council met again on January 30th, but failed to effect any crystallisation of opinions or plans. Foch enlivened matters somewhat by stating his opinion that Great Britain was not going all out to win. Clemenceau said that operations against Turkey should be expanded only on condition that effectives on the Western Front were maintained; and, when the British Prime Minister could give no guarantee to that effect, and advanced the opinion that the Western Front had always been over-insured, he (Clemenceau) found himself in entire disagreement with the Turkish plan.

Nevertheless, that plan was adopted by the Council, with the proviso that no forces should be sent eastward from France. Clemenceau then asked Robertson his views on the plan. This question placed the C.I.G.S. in an awkward quandary. Silence might be regarded as affirmative equally with assent, and he was naturally averse to a public disagreement with his chief. In a vital matter, however, he considered it his duty to adopt the latter alternative, and accordingly declared the proposed plan to be, in his opinion, both dangerous and impracticable.

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 40.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

INSERTING FUSES

Men of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry attaching fuses to Stokes-mortar bombs near Ypres, October 1st, 1917. Sir Wilfrid Stokes, a distinguished engineer before the War, invented his famous mortar in 1915. It consists of a tube closed at the breech, and fitted with a striker which explodes the propelling charge in the base of the projectile as soon as the latter is dropped in.

The "E.W.B." Created

On February 1st the Council considered the question of establishing a General Reserve, as to the desirability of which it was in unanimous agreement. But there were obstacles in the path. One was the difficulty of finding the necessary divisions. The French wished to retain in Salonika all troops at present there. The Italians objected to any transfer of French or British divisions from Italy. The intended blow at Turkey precluded the withdrawal of troops from the east. And there were many other difficulties.

Finally, the following resolutions were passed: that an Executive War Board should be created, consisting of the P.M.R.'s with Foch as President; and that it should exercise, in consultation with the commanders-in-chief of armies, full powers with regard to the strength, composition, and location of the General Reserve, and how, when, and where it should be used.

The E.W.B. decided that the General Reserve should consist of 30 divisions, of which 10, including three now on the Italian front, should be British; and on February 6th it informed the commanders-in-chief to that effect. Pétain agreed to furnish eight divisions, and Diaz, the Italian commander, six. Haig did not reply until March 2nd, and then said that all his divisions were

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NORTH OF GUILLEMONT

Then and Now

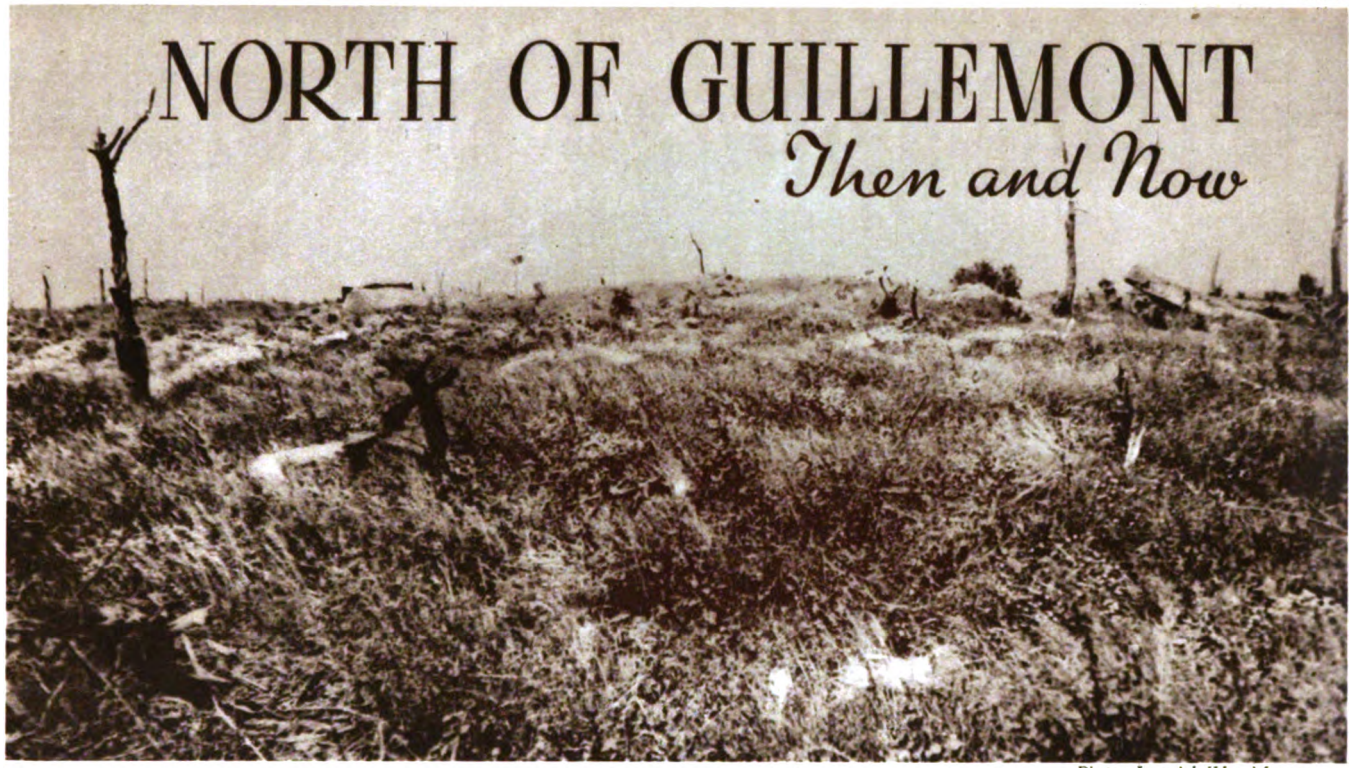

Photo: Imperial War Museum

RUIN

It is difficult to detect the presence of a village amid the undergrowth and desolation together making up this scene; yet the photograph is a view, taken on July 2nd, 1917, of what had once been Ginchy, 1½ km. north of Guillemont and 3 km. north-west of Combles. Only 2 km. from the eastern fringe of Ginchy is Delville Wood, while in the vicinity also are Flers, Lesbœufs, and Morval. There is therefore no mistaking that this village lies in one of the most important areas of the Somme battlefield.

Photo: Keystone

RAIN

A rustic scene in modern Ginchy, with the patter of raindrops supplanting that of machine-gun fire, and the crunch of horses' hooves replacing the crash of bursting shells. The village first became directly involved in the First Battle of the Somme when the British began advancing toward it on August 18th, 1916, as part of the 11-mile "push" launched on this date between Thiepval and Guillemont. However, several weeks of weary fighting were to ensue before its final capture, which occurred on September 9th.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

BETWEEN GINCHY AND LESBŒUFS

A more-or-less detailed account of the events preceding and immediately following the capture of Ginchy on September 9th, 1916, will be found beneath the four pictures of this region on pages 703–4. The photographs there reproduced form, as it were, the complement of those here chosen to illustrate this small but highly important War village. The above view shows a scene during the Battle of Morval: German prisoners are being marched from Lesbœufs to Ginchy, while a derelict tank, originally detailed to work with the III Corps, is seen in the background. Dated September 25th, 1916.

Photo: Keystone

CHANGED—AND YET UNCHANGED

In this view the village of Lesbœufs (3½ km. north-east of Ginchy) is clearly seen in the distance. When the tide of war again flooded across the Somme country, in March, 1918, Ginchy lay almost on the boundary-line between the Third and Fifth Armies. (This line ran from Sailly-Saillisel westward to Montauban.) The village was re-entered by the Germans at 2.30 p.m. on March 24th, the sector having previously been held by the 47th (Third Army) and 9th (Fifth Army) Divisions.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

FACTORY CORNER, NEAR FLERS

As in the case of Ginchy, the fame of Flers has led to its introduction more than once among our illustrations, and the details of its welfare during the turmoil of 1916 have been set forth in various captions. The story of the tank which made so triumphal a progress up the village street in September, 1916, is one of the best-known episodes in the whole War. The precise situation of the village is 3 km. slightly west of north from Ginchy, and midway between Martinpuich and Lesbœufs. In the above view we see all that remained to be photographed of a local factory on May 15th, 1917.

Photo: Keystone

FACTORY AT A CROSS-ROADS

The most interesting feature about the rebuilt factory at Flers is the tall and slender cross—seen here as a mere rod between the centre and right-hand buildings—which stood upon the same spot, in the midst of the battlefield, during the War days. The final recapture of the village for the Allies took place on August 27th–28th, 1918, the 38th (Welsh) and 17th Divisions (in particular the latter) being the formations concerned. Two British cemeteries now exist here.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A DISTINGUISHED TRIO

The names of the three officers seated on the dug-out roof are Alexis Aladin, C. E. W. Bean, and John Masefield. The last-named needs no introduction, and probably few old soldiers need to be told that C. E. W. Bean afterwards became the Australian Official Historian. The scene is again laid in the neighbourhood of Flers, and the date four days earlier than that of the war-time picture on the previous page.

Photo: Keystone

WHERE DUG-OUTS HONEYCOMBED THE GROUND

During our retreat of spring, 1918, enemy patrols reached Flers on March 24th. The Flers–Gueudecourt line had been held by the 17th Division engineers, who, as the sector became hard-pressed, were reinforced about 7.30 p.m. on the 24th by the 50th Brigade, under Brig.-Gen. Yatman. At Flers Yatman met Brig.-Gen. Eden, of the 52nd Brigade, which had retired earlier in the afternoon from Rocquigny, and was now in position on the north-eastern edge of " where Flers had once stood " (*Official History*). At 9.30 p.m. both brigades, utterly exhausted, abandoned Flers for Eaucourt l'Abbaye, taking two hours to cover the 1½ miles.

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already disposed for meeting an imminent attack, that he was satisfied with the arrangements he had made with Pétain for mutual support, and that he therefore declined to contribute his quota to the reserve. In fact, he was prepared to resign rather than do so.

Haig, for some months past, had been thwarted and irritated at every turn. He had not been allowed to continue his offensive. He had been "refused the drafts necessary to bring his divisions up to strength, though he knew the requisite numbers were available in England. When, in consequence, he wanted to disband fifteen of his divisions, he was forced instead to reorganise his army into smaller formations at a period when he wished to devote all his energies to preparations for battle.

Haig's Difficult Position

"At the same time he had to take over a considerable stretch of new ground. Then, when his difficulties appeared likely to be solved by the use of American battalions, that hope was snatched from him. Finally, he learnt that the Prime Minister and Sir Henry Wilson were advocating a major campaign against the Turks, and the reduction, to the lowest possible level, of men and commitments on the Western Front, where alone he believed the war could be won.

"Buffeted thus by unkind fate, his prickles must have been out in every direction to guard his army from further inroads upon its strength and efficiency; and he would hardly have been human had he accepted with any sign of alacrity a proposal that he should contribute divisions to a General Reserve which might be employed under charge of a Committee anywhere on the Western Front."[1]

On the other hand, no long defensive line could possibly be considered secure without a strong reserve under a control which would override that of the commanders-in-chief. It is certain that Haig, had he been in supreme command, would have insisted on its provision, and it is equally certain that he would never have accepted from one of his own army commanders such excuses for not contributing to the British reserve as he made to the Supreme Council.

However, his refusal was upheld. He had forced the British Prime Minister and the Supreme Council to retract incontrovertible opinions held and urged whole-heartedly. This was the last meeting of the Council prior to the great battle. It had existed for 3½ months,

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 37.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SCAVENGING

Not, of course, to be confused with "scrounging"—a far more interesting operation. The scavengers, a working-party, are seen collecting material from ruined buildings at Cambrin for the purpose of strengthening dug-outs. It may be recalled that "Then and Now" pictures of this village on the Béthune—La Bassée road appeared on pages 974, 975, and 1006.

and "had done nothing tangible towards meeting the imminent German assault."[1] Of the E.W.B. Foch remarked with some bitterness that it had "existed only to chatter."[1]

Actually, the only co-operative action taken prior to the battle was a dis-

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 86.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 85.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DOWN FROM THE LINE

A tired-looking trainload of Royal Engineers comes down from the line by light railway near Ypres, amid the winter discomfort of 1917/1918. The exact date of the picture is January 7th, 1918—on which day, it is now interesting to note, almost the only European event recorded in War calendars is the arrival of Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk as chief Soviet delegate to the Russo-German peace conference.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

YORKS AND LANCS

A Stokes mortar and emplacement, manned by the 6th Battalion York and Lancaster Regt., at Cambrin, February 6th, 1918. This regiment played a gallant part in the Flanders struggle of two months later, when some of its battalions, as part of the IX Corps, fought with several of the participating brigades. At one time (April 12th) the 5th Battalion was within an ace of being surrounded by the enemy. The Yorks and Lancs had also distinguished itself, a month earlier, on the Somme.

cussion, in joint session, of plans to that end by a French army commander and a British corps commander, with their respective staffs, but without troops.

Two Methods—Both Rejected

If the Allies were to be endowed with a reasonable chance of repelling the German onslaught, there was only one alternative to a general reserve, and that was an arrangement for the launching of a powerful counter-attack from the sector or sectors not under assault. Such a plan, which had been suggested by Foch and Robertson and negatived by Haig and Pétain, might well have been successful, given a close watch upon the enemy, careful preparations, and a live co-operation between the Allies.

"There were thus only two methods whereby victory might have been achieved or serious defeat warded off; and, owing to the absence of unity of control, they were both rejected. The most critical point in the Great War found the Allies without a plan."[1]

"It is interesting to note . . . how each of the Allies wanted to play for his own hand in spite of the impending crisis: Haig to guard the Channel ports; Pétain to cover Paris; Orlando to obtain extra protection for Italy; and Pershing to have a hundred-per-cent American Army. Only the imminence of complete and irremediable disaster was to unite them to a common aim under a single control.

"Clearly Germany in her unified command possessed a tremendous advantage."[1]

Having, in view of the immense issues involved, dealt in some detail with the political and strategic discussions on the side of the Allies, it is time for us to turn to their opponents.

The German High Command envisaged approximately equal numbers on the Franco-British front, and had to create the necessary superiority of strength, opposite the sector chosen for assault, by the greatest economy of force both on other sectors of the Western Front and on other fronts.

Ludendorff Chooses his Ground

The decision as to which portion of the Allied front to attack was a matter for long and anxious consideration. The choice would have fallen on the area north of the Scarpe, where the British were crowded into a narrow space with their backs to the sea, but for the fact that the ground over which much of the attack must pass was generally marshy until April, and Ludendorff was most anxious to begin his offensive in the early spring, before the Americans appeared in force.

Another objection to an assault on this front was its immense strength. The question, "Is penetration possible on the Western Front?" had yet to be answered. Certainly the prospects of a break-through stood far higher to the south, where the British were holding thinly a long stretch of trenches taken over from the French.

Ludendorff held a series of general staff conferences on the subject all through the winter—to which, curiously enough, he did not bother to invite the Kaiser, the Crown Prince, or even Hindenburg, though the eventual order was issued by command of the first and signed by the third. He chose the front from the Scarpe to the Oise, and entrusted the attack to three armies, the *Seventeenth* (19 divs.), the *Second*, (20 divs.), and the *Eighteenth* (24 divs.), commanded respectively by von Below (the victor of Caporetto), von Marwitz, and von Hutier (the victor at Riga). The blow was to be aimed at the right

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 52.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

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of the British Third Army, and at the whole of the Fifth Army. "The first thing," said Ludendorff, "is to beat the British. The French will not hasten to the help of their friends who are being attacked. They will wait to see whether or not their own front is to be attacked, and will only decide to support their ally when the situation is clear. And that will be too late."

Ludendorff had now 193 divisions, with 14,000 guns, on the Western Front, and out of them had managed to assemble 66 divisions, with 6,000 guns, for the decisive attack—52 of these divisions being specially prepared "storm" troops. In so doing, he had furnished a shining example of economy of force. "While, in a secondary theatre, half a million second-rate troops held a front of 1,500 miles, in the decisive theatre a million first-class troops were thrown against a line fifty miles in length."[1]

The Attack is Formulated

The two right armies were in Prince Rupprecht's Group, and the left in the Crown Prince's Group, Ludendorff having made that arrangement in order to keep the control of the battle in his own hands. The former were to pinch out the Flesquières salient, and then to roll up the British armies to the north-west. The latter was at first intended to hold the Crozat Canal and the Somme, in order to protect the left flank of the main stroke against the French reserves; but later, being the largest of the armies and under the most thrusting of the commanders, its rôle developed into something much more ambitious, namely, to cross the Somme to the line Roye—Noyon, and to strike the flank of the French reserves as they moved north.

The total strength of the assailants is a little uncertain, as many of the divisions in the trenches did not join in the assault. The *Official History*, however, states that 43 divisions attacked Gough's 14, which included two in G.H.Q. reserve; and that 19 attacked Byng's centre and right, he having a total of 16 divisions, also including two in G.H.Q. reserve.

Seldom in war has the art of surprise been so sedulously pursued. "On the actual front of attack, infinite precautions were taken to conceal the immense accumulation of troops. All important movements were made by night; the attacking divisions were kept well back,

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 55.

'HALT! WHO GOES THERE?"

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A sentry of the 1/4th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment on the *qui vive* in a sap-head near Givenchy, January 28th, 1918. This battalion is mentioned in Vol. I of the *Official History* for 1918 in connection with events at Hargicourt on March 21st. The 4th East Lancs was at that date garrisoning the village, whose defences were penetrated by the enemy at 10.30 a.m. Soon afterwards, attacked in front and on both flanks, the battalion sustained fearful losses, and such of the garrison as were not killed or captured were compelled to abandon the village.

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and only brought up at the latest moment . . .

" The deployment of the artillery was divided into three time-classes : batteries whose emplacements were well concealed were brought up first ; next, those whose emplacements did not permit of good concealment, but which had adjacent cover where the guns could be hidden until the last moment ; and, thirdly, the batteries which had no concealment.

" The concentration of the air force was very carefully thought out : additional hangars were put up, and wireless stations and aerodromes installed along the whole front of attack ; but the machines themselves were kept well back, or, in the areas adjoining the front of attack, pilots were brought up in small parties to learn the front, and no extra activity shown . . . extra wireless stations and power buzzers were installed on the front where attacks were to be feigned."[1]

Effective German Feints

The feints were carried out with great thoroughness, and rumours were spread of impending attacks on fronts other than the one selected. Perhaps the most effective trick played was the freeing, so as to fall behind the French lines, of a captive balloon, containing papers which gave details of an imaginary attack on a grand scale south of Rheims.

The results fully justified the labour involved. French General Headquarters were completely deceived as to the direction of the main attack, and were in consequence extremely slow in moving their reserves. The British Intelligence Service was much better informed, and was, as the hour of the crisis approached, able to forecast with accuracy both the date and the place of the hostile blow ; but it, too, was for long torn by doubts.

Lastly, as regards the German preparation, the psychological factor needs mention. For years past the German soldier on the Western Front had been fighting defensive battles—a process detrimental to his morale. Now at last he was to attack ; he was to leave the pestilent trenches for the fields of open warfare ; he was to join, he was assured, in a final bid for victory where the chances of success would be all on his side. Small wonder, then, that he marched to battle with an enthusiasm which had long been conspicuous only by its absence.

The following are some of the points stressed in German orders :—

No limit to daily objective.

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 155.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

GRANDE RUE, ASSEVILLERS

On pages 1158 and 1159 we illustrated the church of this little Somme village ; here and on the next page we show the main street. This runs from west to east, and is part of the country-road leading from Fay to Barleux and Péronne. The other street, seen debouching into the Grande Rue on the right, is that leading into Assevillers from Estrées-Deniécourt on the Amiens—St. Quentin road. The above photograph was taken on July 11th, 1917.

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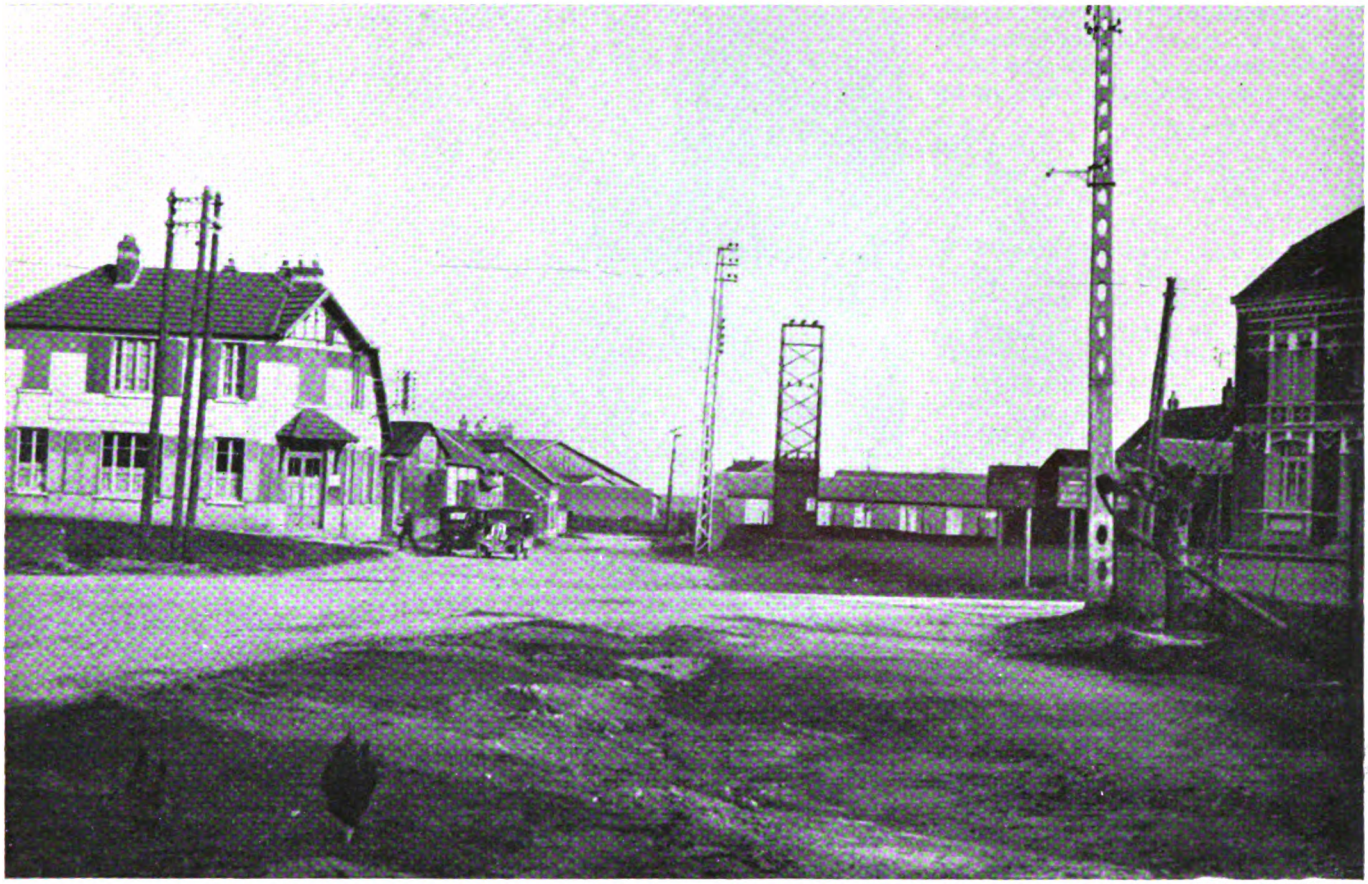

Photo: G. T. Watson.

WITH FOWLS IN THE FOREGROUND

Out of nearly 2,500 British cemeteries in France and Belgium, maintained and in many cases constructed under the auspices of the Imperial War Graves Commission, all but 15 had been completed by 1930. Of those 15, however, the unfinished New British Cemetery at Assevillers was one; and this village may therefore claim to possess one of the newest burial-grounds—so far—on the British front. But the earth is still yielding up its dead, in considerable numbers; and (to take a typical example), of 887 British bodies found in France in 1935, 603 were discovered on the former Somme battlefields.

Troops must at least reach enemy gun-lines on the first day.

Storm troops must be continually reinforced.

Troops not to bother about keeping touch on right or left, but only to keep touch with the enemy.

No daily reliefs to be expected.

The Last Great Bid

In fact, something more powerful, more aggressive, more persistent, more carefully led, was intended, than any previous attack in the War.

"Three armies, all splendidly trained, armed, and equipped stand ready for battle; and Ludendorff might well be proud of the grim machine to whose creation his will-power, administrative genius, and power for work had so greatly contributed. He was perhaps to make a last great bid for victory; but his stroke was not, as it has been called, a gambler's throw; for the venture held in its core the promise of high success. He had staged an attack destined to sweep away entrenchments as things of naught and renew the ancient art of war in the open, where the special training of his troops might find reward, and where commanders of every degree might exercise their skill untrammelled."[1]

We left the British Army away back in December, making preparations for a defensive campaign, digging entrenched systems, and learning how to defend them. In accordance with instructions issued by G.H.Q., the defensive line was to be organised in three zones—forward, battle, and rear, the total depth of the system being about 8 miles.

The Forward Zone, 600 to 4,000 yards in depth, was the strongest of the three belts, having been longest in occupation. It consisted of a fully wired and continuous, though not continuously garrisoned, outpost line, behind which were a number of strong-points intended to break up an attack. It was protected by sections of field artillery, detached from their batteries and placed in advanced positions.

The Battle Zone, one to two miles in depth, was the main line of resistance. It was for the most part fairly well entrenched, and was covered by the bulk of artillery.

The Rear Zone, 4 to 8 miles behind the Battle Zone, was, owing to scarcity of labour, nowhere complete. At best it consisted of a single well-wired trench protected by battery positions, dug and stocked with ammunition. At worst, it was a spitlocked line covered by an apron of wire.[1]

Copied from the Enemy

This system was borrowed from the German scheme at Passchendaele. There our opponents had succeeded in avoiding serious defeat by maintaining a thin forward line, with more thickly-held lines in rear. By these means they had escaped severe losses from shell fire,

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 27.

[1] A spitlocked line is one marked by a groove in the ground.

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and, although to a large extent they lost their front line, were in many places able to recapture it by a counter-attack delivered by troops held close up for that purpose.

At the time when this method had been adopted, however, the Salient had become sodden and shell-riven. The British infantry could only crawl forward, and whole days were absorbed in pushing guns up to support even the shortest advance. The enemy had therefore ample time, if his line were penetrated, either to prepare fresh positions in rear, or to assemble his divisions for the counter-stroke.

In Picardy, on the other hand, the ground was hard and but little shell-torn, and the country open—conditions which lent themselves to a rapid advance on the part of the assailant. Moreover, at Passchendaele we had been accustomed to give the Germans lengthy notice of our intention to assault by a bombardment of several days' duration.

At Cambrai we had broken with that idea. But so had von Hutier at Riga, and he now lay opposite to us at St. Quentin, with his Chief of Artillery, Bruchmüller, who had smashed so many lines with his new-fangled methods that he was commonly known as "Durchbruchmüller." Thus the long preliminary bombardment during which reserves could be rushed up for the counter-stroke, or fresh positions dug in rear of the threatened sector, was most unlikely to occur.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SNOWED UP

A tragic scene on the lone highway between Hesdin and St. Pol, December, 1917: an R.E. motor-cyclist finds himself snowed up. The recollection of Hesdin is inseparably bound up with that of a multitude of schools of instruction and formation H.Q., while history-lovers like to think of it as near the famous battlefield of Crécy.

The danger, then, was that our Forward Zone would be quickly over-run, and our Battle Zone exposed to a concentrated onslaught without much previous notice. In a strongly-garrisoned and heavily entrenched position, the defender might succeed in offering a successful resistance; but, if either or both the necessary conditions remained unfulfilled, only the quick arrival of powerful reserves could save the situation.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

FETCHING RATIONS

A flashlight photograph revealing company ration-parties of the 12th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles on their way to fetch rations from the limbers by night. At this time (February 7th, 1918) the battalion was stationed near Essigny—a village destined to be occupied by the enemy just six weeks later. Note the shy countenance in the centre.

Dark Days in the Line

In general, about one third of the infantry—in the case of the Fifth Army, 37 battalions out of 110—were in the Forward Zone, the remainder being distributed between the Battle Zone and the Rear Zone.

A devastating comment by an N.C.O. of 1914 on the excess to which the system of distribution in depth had been driven is quoted in the *Official History*: "It don't suit us. The British Army fights in line and won't do any good in these bird-cages." The troops were certainly in an unhappy position. Distributed in patches, far from support, receiving newspapers daily containing reports of the transfer of Germans by the hundred-thousand from Russia to the trenches opposite them, they realised that, if the attack fell during their turn of duty, they were bound to be either killed or captured.

The question whether or not leave should be granted at this time was of

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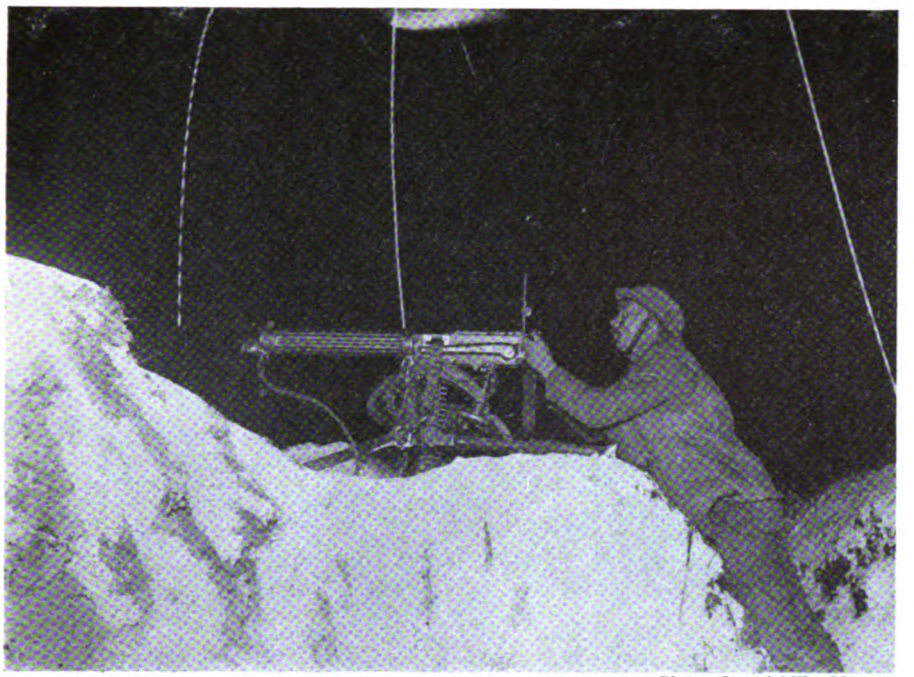

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NIGHT WORK

And cold work, too, amid the January snows. The machine-gunner illustrated is traversing German communication-trenches near Cambrai during the night of January 14th/15th, 1918. It was on the 15th (not that the machine-gunner either knew or cared) that the Cabinet enquiry into the conduct of the Cambrai battle resulted in the finding that the Higher Command had not been surprised.

considerable importance. The soldiers who had fought at Arras, Passchendaele, and Cambrai deserved rest if ever men did. Yet, with every indication that we were about to fight the greatest battle in history, with the balance of numbers against us, was it right to part with 80,000 men? It is difficult to say. The battle might be of long duration. Men returning from leave could be treated as reinforcements. Moreover, it was galling to know that the French generally had 350,000 men away at a time.

It is thus at least arguable that the rank and file, and, perhaps, a reduced percentage of the junior officers, should have had leave. But certainly no senior officer should have been allowed to go, for every brigadier absent had to be replaced temporarily by a lieut.-colonel, whose place had to be taken by a major, whose place again had to be taken by a captain. Thus, at the outbreak of a mighty struggle, a large number of commanding and staff officers would be doing work strange to them. It would be interesting to know how many German officers of the assaulting troops were on leave on the 21st March.

The British had four armies in line. Of these, the Fifth Army held a front of 42 miles, and the other three armies between them one of 84 miles. These latter three had 49 divisions compared with Gough's 11 (counting three cavalry divisions as the equal of one infantry division), whereas, on a true apportionment of men to miles, the respective figures should have been 40 and 20. Of heavy guns Gough should have had 600 instead of 288; and a similar disproportion was everywhere apparent.

The Third and Fifth Armies

The Third Army, which had been a year in position and was disposed only over a length of 28 miles, had 10 divisions in the line, and was able to keep four in reserve. Gough, who had finished taking over the weak French line at the end of January, had 10 divisions stretched over a wider distance, with only one division and the cavalry in reserve.

The situation of the Fifth Army was viewed with grave anxiety both by its commander and by G.H.Q. Gough wrote a very clear letter on the subject on February 1st. He pointed out his weakness in men, in trenches, and in roads and railways behind his line, and indicated that he could not hope to resist successfully unless a large quantity of labour both skilled and unskilled were placed at his disposal.

Dealing with reserves, he said his own could be brought into action in 48 hours, and those of G.H.Q. in 96 hours—a satisfactory arrangement only if he were given 96 hours' notice, which condition was unlikely of fulfilment in view of the short duration of bombardments in recent battles.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE CHRISTMAS ATMOSPHERE

A snow-scene at Neulette, December 17th, 1917: four Tommies, two of whom might well pass for Old Bill himself, gather round an improvised brazier, in the lee of a wood, to thaw their aching fingers. At this period, when all was "quiet" on the Western Front, tremendous U-boat activity was still going on off the Allied coasts, more than 250,000 tons of British shipping being sunk during the month.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SITE OF BAZENTIN-LE-PETIT

Several references have been made, in the captions of war-time photographs, to the capture of Bazentin-le-Petit on July 14th, 1916, by the 3rd and 7th Divisions, and of its wood, on the same date, by the 21st Division. Here, dating from almost a year later, is a view of the village itself—or of all that was left of it after the fighting in this area had died down.

RUSTIC PEACE

No village, it seems, can ever be so wholly erased by the barbarism of war that its peaceful inhabitants shrink from returning and stoically rebuilding it when the combatants have finished. On March 25th, 1918, the little group of men representing what had once been the 47th Division, V Corps, were concentrated for some hours in a deep re-entrant behind Bazentin-le-Petit during the Retreat.

Photo. G. T. Watson.

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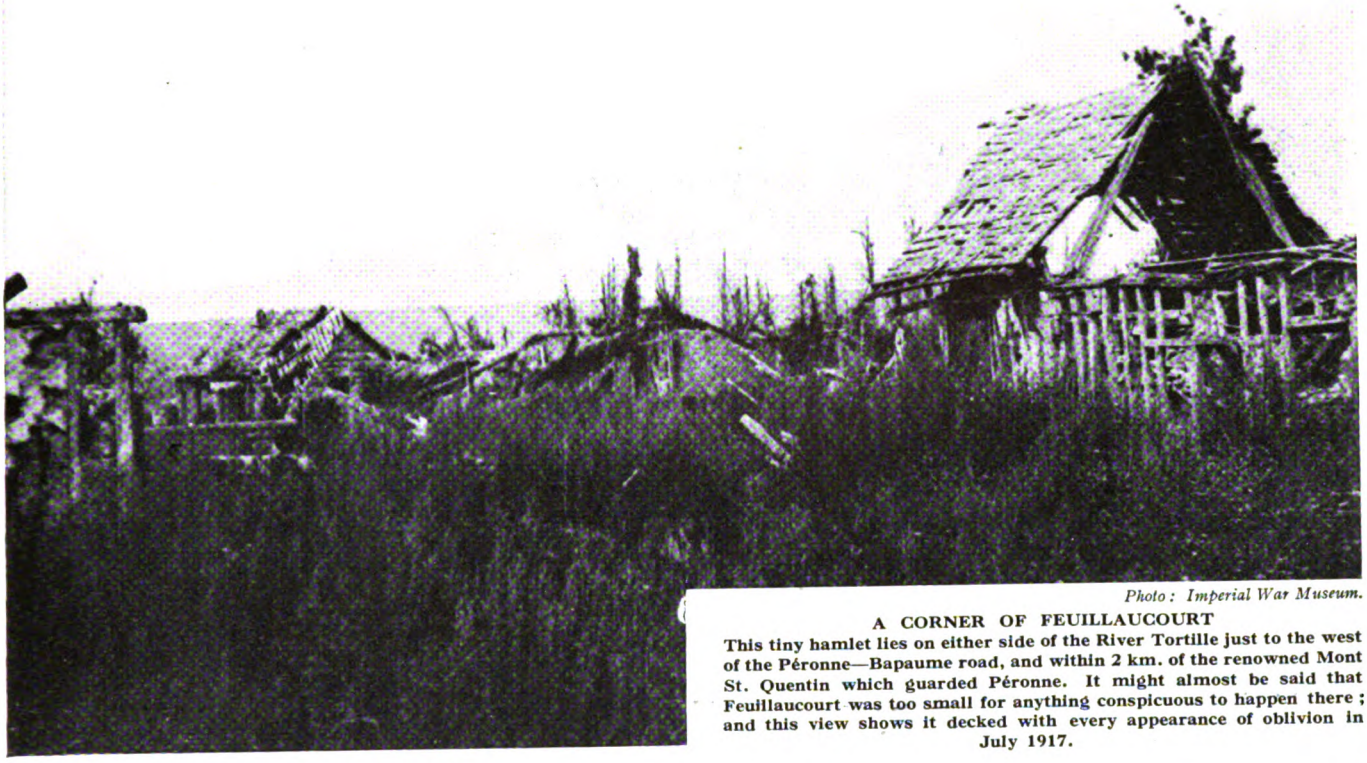

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A CORNER OF FEUILLAUCOURT

This tiny hamlet lies on either side of the River Tortille just to the west of the Péronne—Bapaume road, and within 2 km. of the renowned Mont St. Quentin which guarded Péronne. It might almost be said that Feuillaucourt was too small for anything conspicuous to happen there; and this view shows it decked with every appearance of oblivion in July 1917.

A FORGOTTEN HAMLET

An air of oblivion still prevails over Feuillaucourt, for it has never been properly rebuilt, a few brick houses and a handful of rusty tin shelters comprising the sum of its modern extent. During the March Retreat, 64th Brigade (21st Division) H.Q. were established here on the 23rd of the month. Eventually the hamlet was retaken by Australian forces on August 31st, 1918.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE REMNANTS OF BOUCHAVESNES

Bouchavesnes-Bergen, to name it in full, lies, like Feuillaucourt, just off the Péronne—Bapaume road, but on the eastern side, and some 3½ km. farther north. This is tantamount to saying that it is 6 km. almost due north of Péronne, and 4 km. north-east of Cléry-sur-Somme. The village first fell to the Allies in the great French assault of September 12th, 1916, after which various French, and later British, minor operations resulted in small successes in the vicinity. The present scene of desolation was photographed on July 24th, 1917.

G.H.Q., replying on February 4th, pointed out that means were not available for rendering the faulty communications behind the Army really efficient. They therefore suggested the consideration of a retirement to the Somme—a procedure which would transfer to the enemy the burden of traversing "badly-roaded" country, and which would enable us to use the Somme and the Crozat canal as factors in the defence.

Against these advantages, they said, must be weighed the damage to morale, the difficulty of settling when and how to retire, and the special importance of holding the knot of communications at Péronne. Dropping for the moment this suggestion, which they do not seem ever to have pressed, they proceeded to discuss, both in this letter and in one of the 9th February, the conduct of the battle in the chosen position. They suggested that the ground protected by the Battle Zone was not of sufficient importance to warrant reinforcements being thrown into the fight or counter-attacks on a large scale launched, and they indicated that it might be desirable for the Army (presumably if defeated) to fall back behind the Somme.

Not Wholly to Blame

It seems a pity that Gough did not accept the suggestion of a retirement to the Somme prior to battle. No ardent soldier likes to abandon ground; but leadership demands something more than the satisfaction of personal emotions. The possibility of retreat had not been kept secret, and its discussion among the troops was certain to lower staunchness in the clash of battle; whereas a planned and well-conducted withdrawal would hardly have affected morale. As to danger, it was not great; for it was shown by many operations in the War that pressure in pursuit is difficult to maintain over broken country against a well-organised army.

Had the Germans struck a blow "in the air" after all their preparations, it would have been a sad disappointment to them. They would have lost some of their precious time. They would have had to mount a fresh attack, within an uncomfortable re-entrant, against a position protected, possibly, by inundations.

Gough, however, was by no means wholly to blame for failing to take the hint of G.H.Q.; for, in matters of such importance, it was for G.H.Q., not to suggest, but to order.

As regards the provision of labour, it was not found possible to fulfil all the Fifth Army's demands; but, between February 1st and March 21st, the

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number of labourers allotted to Gough's defences rose from 900 to 9,000, without counting 14 entrenching battalions which had been formed out of surplus infantry when divisions had been reduced.

There was, perhaps, at this time too much excitement behind the line, too much haranguing of the troops by senior officers, specially deputed for that purpose, on fighting to the death. "Such language puts no stuffing into the soldier. It merely makes him think that his leaders are panicking," and gives rise to such expressions as: "There is a vertical wind in Command châteaux." "Patrols report all clear. G.H.Q. can stand down."[1]

Fifth Army Dispositions

We may now turn to actual dispositions. The Fifth Army had its headquarters in Nesle. Along its front from right to left were the III (Butler), XVIII (Maxse), XIX (Watts), and VII Corps—the last-named being commanded by Congreve, who, in company with young Roberts, had won a V.C. during the South African War for saving guns at Colenso.

There were 11 divisions in line, and nearly 1,200 field and over 500 heavy guns in action. In Army reserve were the 50th Division, 30 miles west of St. Quentin, 3 Cavalry divisions distributed evenly behind the line, and, at Tincourt, 3 battalions of tanks. In G.H.Q. reserve, in the area of the Fifth Army, were the 20th Division behind the right corps, and the 39th behind the left.

Out of a frontage of 71,000 yards, 31,000 yards were assigned to the III Corps, whose front, when taken over from the French, was covered by marshes, now rapidly-drying. Butler—the commander—kept his main strength on his left, the division there—the 14th—which had to guard the important plateau of Essigny, having to cover only 4,500 yards, against the 16,000 yards held by the 58th Division on the right. Of the latter, moreover, a single battalion was spun out over 7,000 yards of the Forward Zone—on duties that might have been better and more safely performed by outposts or patrols. The 18th Division was in the centre, covered by the Oise. Behind the Corps was the 2nd Cavalry Division.

The XVIII Corps held a line of 16,000 yards, well-entrenched, of which the Battle Zone was on strong ground, but the Forward Zone was overlooked in parts by St. Quentin, which the French had asked us not to shell. The corps' 3

[1] *History of the 34th Division.*

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A FINE HIGHWAY

A splendid stretch of the Péronne—Bapaume road, with the outlying houses of Bouchavesnes now flanking it. On the evening of March 23rd, 1918, the South African Brigade, acting in reserve to the 9th Division, was ordered to fall back to a line just behind the village from the high ground to east of it. Actually, however, owing to a misunderstanding, it retired to a situation considerably farther behind Bouchavesnes, and immediately in front of Marrières Wood. Then, on the 24th, occurred the well-known and exceedingly gallant stand of the South Africans in which the whole brigade was annihilated, its commander, Brig.-Gen. Dawson, himself being captured after working a machine gun to the last. Bouchavesnes was retaken on September 1st, 1918, the last day of the second stage of the final British offensive.

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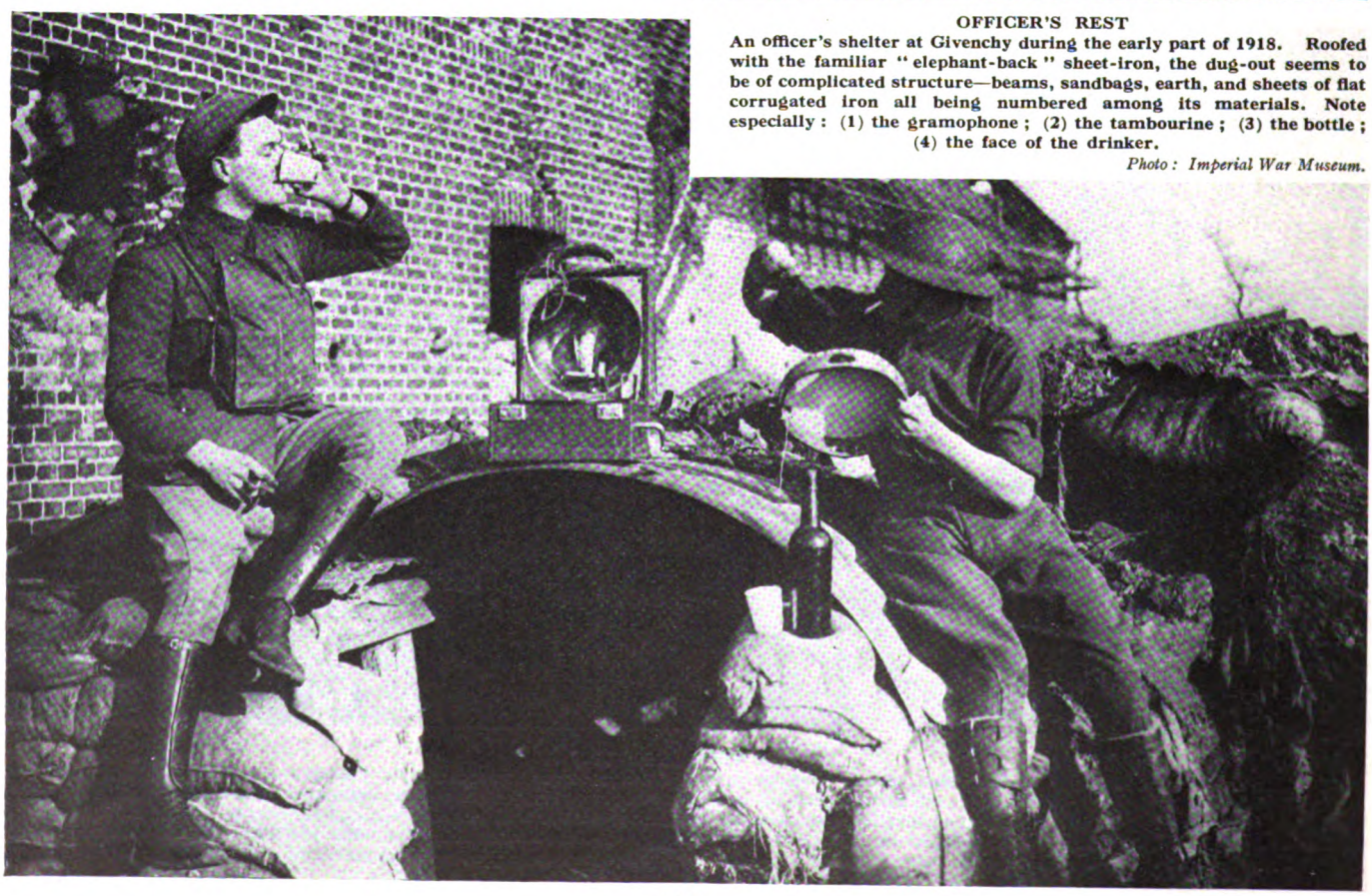
Photo : Imperial War Museum.

MARCHING UP THROUGH HESDIN

Amid rain and mud, the Canadian 2nd Brigade marches through Hesdin on its way to a forward area, January 21st, 1918. The events of March, 1918, found this brigade in Third Army reserve until the 28th of the month, when the 1st Canadian Division (1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades) was placed at the disposal of the XVII Corps.



OFFICER'S REST

An officer's shelter at Givenchy during the early part of 1918. Roofed with the familiar "elephant-back" sheet-iron, the dug-out seems to be of complicated structure—beams, sandbags, earth, and sheets of flat corrugated iron all being numbered among its materials. Note especially : (1) the gramophone ; (2) the tambourine ; (3) the bottle ; (4) the face of the drinker.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT DELVILLE WOOD

Major-Gen. Sir H. T. Lukin, commander of the 9th Division, presenting decorations at the South African Brigade's memorial service at Delville Wood, February 17th, 1918. General Lukin is in the centre of the photograph, and is in the act of turning aside to Brigadier-Gen. F. S. Dawson, commander of the brigade.

A SOUTH AFRICAN GRAVE

A South African nurse, accompanied by a chaplain, places a wreath on the grave of her brother, Private D. B. H. Fynn, at Delville Wood, February 17th, 1918. This scene of South African heroism in 1916 is to-day honoured by a fine memorial to all from the Dominion "who made the great sacrifice on the battlefields of Africa, Asia, and Europe, and on the sea."

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

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divisions—the 36th, 30th, and 61st, in that order from right to left—were all in the line. The 1st Cavalry Division lay on the Somme in support.

The XIX Corps, with only two divisions, met the XVIII Corps just south of the Omignon, the 24th Division being on the right and the 66th on the left.

The VII Corps had the 16th (South Irish), 21st, and 9th Divisions in the line, in that order from right to left, each division with one brigade and its Pioneers in reserve. Of the remaining battalions, the 16th had no less than five and the others four, in the Forward Zone, which was on stronger ground than the Battle Zone.

The complete distribution of the battalions of the Fifth Army was thus: 37 in Forward Zone, 132 in Battle Zone, and 29 in reserve.

How the Third Army Lay

The Third Army had also four corps—the V (Fanshawe), IV (Harper), VI (Haldane), and XVII (Fergusson). Its line extended north of Arras to the southern slopes of the Vimy Ridge. Out of its 14 divisions, it had four in reserve, and it was nearer than was the Fifth Army to the majority of the G.H.Q. reserves.

The V Corps held the Flesquières salient, of which the Forward Zone formed the arc and the Battle Zone a retrenchment along the base. There was also an intermediate line between the two zones. The 47th Division held the right, the 63rd (Royal Naval) the centre, and the 17th the left. There were two divisions—the 2nd and 19th—in reserve, the first in corps, the second in army reserve.

Here again a withdrawal might have been beneficial. An attempt was almost certain to be made to pinch out the salient. If successful, it might entail the capture of a large number of troops in the Forward Zone. Moreover, the sacrifice of this dangerous ground, which had merely a sentimental value, would have released at least one division from the line to supplement the reserve.

In the IV Corps, the 51st Division on the right was astride the Bapaume—Cambrai road, the 6th, on the left, looked down on Quéant, and the 25th was in reserve.

The area of the VI Corps contained Bullecourt and Croisilles. Here the 59th Division stood on the right, the 34th in the centre, and the 3rd on the left. According to information received from prisoners and deserters, the right

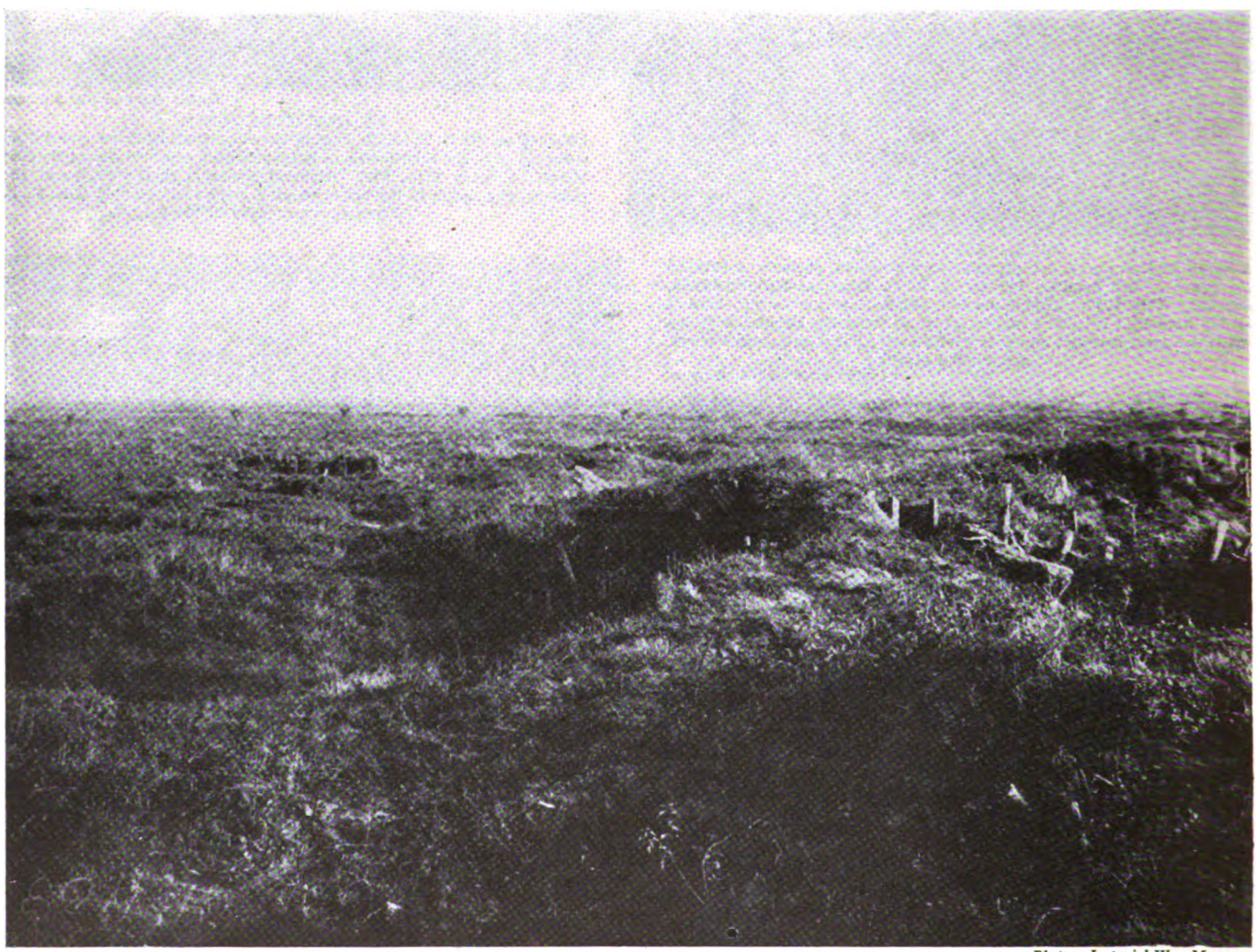

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NOT FAR FROM FROMELLES

This overgrown waste, which may be called a battlefield with a beard, is the former No Man's Land 2½ km. north-west of Fromelles, which in turn is 5 km. north-east of Neuve-Chapelle and 9 km. north-north-east of La Bassée. The picture was taken on the day of the Armistice, and the camera is described as pointing from the old German front-line at the salient, toward the line held by the 14th and 15th Australian Brigades on July 19th. The line of the River Layes, or Layes Brook, can be traced on the right, and remains of concrete pill-boxes are also in evidence.

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Photo: Keystone.

NOUGHT BUT HAYSTACKS

A bleak sight is the former Fromelles battlefield to-day, with never a tree, and never an undulation either. The "Rivière des Laies," which flows approximately north-east—south-west, ran more-or-less along the Allied front line hereabouts in early 1918, and was crossed by the enemy over the greater part of its length when he staged the Laventie break-through against the luckless Portuguese and their British neighbours. Fromelles village had previously been only a short distance within the German lines.

of the main German attack was likely to fall on Bullecourt and on the high ground north of Croisilles.

The XVII Corps, on the left of the Army, had the 15th Division on the right, holding the important high ground about Monchy-le-Preux, the 4th on the left, and the Guards in reserve.

Byng's orders were "that a stout fight should be made in the Forward Zone, but, if the attack was made in great force, the main defence should be made in the Battle Zone." [1]

The Stage is Set

On the eve of battle, "a telephone bell rang. . . . 'Adjutant speaking. . . . Yes, Sir . . . yes . . . I see. Thanks. Hold on, Sir. The Colonel's here. . . .'

"He turned to Colonel Metcalfe.

"'Brigade Major, Sir. He says that Jerry's queueing up. The Warwicks took specimen prisoners from half-a-dozen battalions in the raid just now, so it looks pretty definite—no mistake in the date.'" [1]

Here, then, is the final picture: the date and hour of attack are known; the troops, though tired, are stout enough, but have just finished a disturbing and emasculating re-organisation, and are widely dispersed over an incomplete defensive system. The Cabinet has settled that the front can be held without reinforcement. Haig has not agreed and, faced with a choice of evils, has risked weakness on his right flank, where there is room for retirement without immediately endangering the Channel Ports.

There is no general reserve to the Allied front, and such French divisions as are posted near the junction of the two armies have been drawn far to the south by German feints. Distribution in depth, from being a sound and necessary prescription, has become a disease. The Americans, except for two divisions in a quiet part of the line, are training and travelling. They have not, so far, begun to pull their weight in the struggle. Their effort is to be made at a later stage.

In France the British are about to be tested, and the Fifth Army, upon whom the blow seems likely to fall, holds a line much too long for its strength.

Divided command and divided counsels are confronted with a totalitarian assault. A monster battle—the greatest in history—is about to begin.

1 *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, *i*, p. 134.

1 C. R. Benstead, *Retreat*, p. 23.

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CHAPTER LXXV

THE SILENT NULLAHS OF GALLIPOLI

In a number of earlier chapters we have dealt with descriptions of various sectors of the Western Front as they are to-day. Here is a picture of Gallipoli as it is twenty-two years after. The writer, who served with the 42nd Division, has made more than one pilgrimage to Gallipoli since the War ended and knows the Peninsula better than most. As he could tell you, it is an eerie business wandering alone up and down the deserted gullies and nullahs, places which at one time were scenes of bustling activity, but to-day are once more mere features of that rugged peninsula which has mounted guard over the narrow waters of the Straits since the days of Troy.

A FELLOW-PASSENGER, on a steamer going through the Dardanelles, pointed to the Peninsula and said to me, " That place—it is not good " ; and many people will agree with him, for, in 1915, the men on Gallipoli had but one wish—that they could get away from it and never see it again.

Comparing Past and Present

As time has passed, the hatred of those days has changed to curiosity to see the country under pleasanter conditions, and to compare the present with the past.

For these and other reasons I have revisited Helles twice, independently, living near Sedd-el-Bahr for several days, tramping the country systematically and alone, and photographing what I thought to be of interest and importance. From the narrative of my rambles, three sections have been chosen for TWENTY YEARS AFTER, dealing chiefly with the two great highways of Helles, Great Gully and Krithia Nullah, and with the Helles Memorial and cemeteries. For purposes of contrast, some recollections of 1915, based on my notes for that year, have been included.

Certain parts of Helles can be reached easily enough, many of them by car ; but the trackless country to be found in other areas is a different matter. It often means slow progress over or through natural obstacles, and it always means exhausting labour ; for, although map-distances appear short, the same distances on the ground may include the full Helles variety of country.

As the reader comes with me, in imagination, over some of the ground he once knew so well, we shall find relics of a lost civilisation, we shall see and hear much that was familiar in 1915, and we shall recall the past ; but, I must remind him that we shall be alone, day after day, in a land where thousands of men once lived, where thousands died, and where on headstones in the cemeteries and on the tablets of the Helles Memorial we shall find many names we know.

Great Gully and West Helles

Every man who knew Great Gully in 1915 will remember his tramps up and down the dusty road through this winding ravine. He will remember the dumps of bully and biscuits, water-tins, and ammunition ; the dug-outs on the slopes, the scrub and trees growing on the precipitous sides, the yellow bluffs, the paths, leading to higher shelters and tops, and the places where he could find drinking-water. He will remember the scorching heat, the blinding glare from the gully sides, the white puffs of shrapnel overhead, the sound of pattering balls, and the clouds of brown smoke and dust where high explosives had burst in the Gully.

He will remember processions of stretcher-bearers, and of sweaty, ragged men tormented by flies, going up with heavy loads of rations, or to relieve others in firing-line, birdcage, or sap, for he saw them often enough as he rested by the roadside. He will remember that steep and narrow path up the west side leading to the Mule Tracks ; how it was blocked by mules loaded with S.A.A. boxes and fanatis, and how the Indian drivers cursed or encouraged the struggling, kicking mules ; for he passed them many times. And he will remember his relief when he reached the top and breathed cooler air.

Although Gully Road no longer exists, there are paths through the Ravine, and on these we can make our way slowly, for the shallow-stream must be crossed several times, and there are places where thick and high vegetation blocks the tracks.

Winter rains have washed down loose earth from the steep sides ; but, apart from such small changes, and the newer growths, Great Gully has not altered, and in the deeper sections where there is no breeze, the heat is as hard to bear now as it was in 1915. In this wild place the only sounds we hear are the rustling of scrub or bushes as we break through them, the croaking of bull-frogs by the stream, and the songs of birds.

Those who lived on the Gully sides in 1915 would hardly know their old homes now, for only slight traces of dug-outs and shelters can be seen ; but there are other signs of the occupation, and, on a slope near the Zig Zag, I found buttons from British tunics, webbing, broken rum-jars, and shrapnel and bullets from both sides. In the Turkish gully lines, between Krithia and Fusilier Bluff, two large and live shells lay by the side of the stream ; and close by I came to a clean trench, 10 feet deep and crossable only where the sides had given way.

A short nullah from the north joins the Gully near the final positions, and beyond this point the main gully and its offshoots shallow gradually to the open country near Krithia.

To-day, Geogehan's Bluff and the Boomerang are deserted ; and are places without meaning to the few local people who pass them.

A Pilgrimage to Fusilier Bluff

Gully Beach is a convenient place for starting a walk to Fusilier Bluff by way of the Ægean cliffs and ravines. Readers who were here in 1915 will remember that the spur separating the coast from Great Gully ends in a sharp point. To-day it is difficult to descend this slope, once full of dug-outs, and it is necessary to go down by a series of jumps on to uncertain footholds of loose earth and grass. To climb it is not worth the trouble, as the top can be reached by stone steps and a path, a short distance up the Gully.

From this high ground we look down on a narrow ridge where a path leads to the end of the spur, and our view will include the beach, gully-entrance, and Helles Ridge and Monument in the distance beyond the cliffs. To our right we look down on the remains of a jetty, and a derelict K lighter.

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A wide track on the cliff-top leads to the head of Y Ravine; and as I went forward, crossing and re-crossing the spur, so that I could overlook sea and gully alternately, I saw that the scrub was full of litter. There were bayonet-scabbards whose brittle leather was no longer held by the bleached and rotted stitches; rum-jars—broken as usual—bits of webbing, boots whose leather was in shreds, nose-caps, a mess-tin which may have been used as a brazier (for it was riddled with bayonet stabs), shrapnel cases and balls, and hundreds of Turkish bullets. Here and there the blue enamel of water-bottles caught my eye.

Ghurka Bluff, rugged and lonely, dominates this part of the coast. Before reaching it, I followed a broken path down the slope of Ghurka Ravine to Y Beach, a strip of sand at the foot of Y Ravine and Ghurka Bluff. Over large stones I made my way round the foot of the Bluff, past Bruce's Ravine to Shrapnel Point; and from this corner I could look along the coast to Sari Tepe.

Y Ravine is a gutter where the rains wash down mud and sandy clay, and where a few old tins have settled. As I climbed up it I saw patches of scrub-less earth on the sides of the Ravine, and these were the only signs of our old resting-places. On another walk in this area I found a ruined shelter, nearer the cliff-top, where a mess-tin lid and a rotting ground-sheet were both half-buried in the floor.

Photo: Alec Riley.

A BLUFF IN GULLY RAVINE

This picture is typical of the southern portion of the ravine. Notice the scrub-covered bottom, with further dense scrub on the tops of the cliffs. Here the ravine is stern and narrow, but further up, in the Krithia section, it widens as it rises toward the open country, and becomes quite pleasant to look upon.

In 1915 a popular evening's entertainment was to look down on the Ægean, where our monitors cruised, and to watch them firing. When the monitors had finished, we waited for Nature to show a picture of fire and water. Night after night we sat on the cliffs watching that crimson glow and its reflection, until Imbros and Samothrace vanished in blackness.

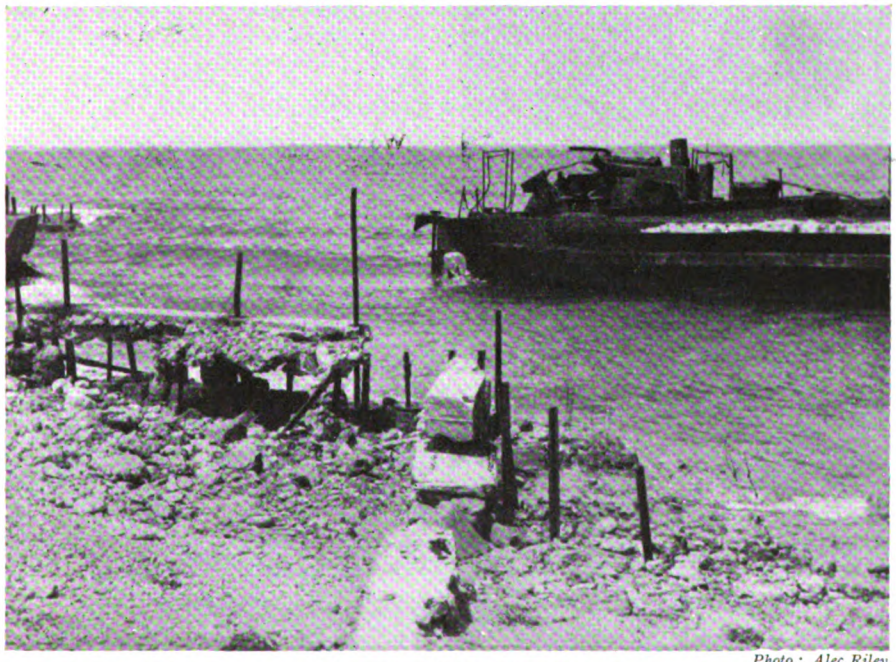

Photo: Alec Riley.

A DERELICT LIGHTER

This again is typical, but typical of the handiwork of Man in Gallipoli rather than that of Nature. The picture comes from Gully Beach, and shows the ruined jetty, with a derelict "K" lighter lying off it. On the night of the evacuation, General Maude—later of Baghdad fame—was to have left the Peninsula on this lighter, but it ran aground, and he had to walk, with a small party, by the coast-road to W Beach.

Sounds Amid the Solitude

To-day the ground at the head of Y Ravine is full of crumbled trenches, and is crossed slowly and with difficulty. On Ghurka Bluff I found a level patch, and here I had lunch in the ruins of a shelter, thankful to find a few inches of shade under a bit of overhanging scrub. From this lonely place it was cheering to see a passing steamer when I looked down on the Ægean, and still more cheering to hear the distant siren of an unseen ship as it left the Dardanelles.

But, however lonely these cliffs and bluffs may be, they are the most delightful places at Helles. The scenery is wild, and the surroundings are full of litter, but the sky is blue, there is a pleasant breeze, and from below come the sounds of wavelets breaking on the shore.

From the top of Ghurka Bluff we can skim the surface of Helles and see the Dardanelles and the high ground at the end of the Peninsula in the hazy distance. From one side of the Bluff we look down on Y Beach and Ravine, and along the cliffs; and from the far side gaze over Bruce's, Essex, Border, and Trolley

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Photo: Alec Riley.

Y BEACH AND Y RAVINE

A photograph of the beach and ravine taken from the side of Ghurka Bluff. To-day a rough place to climb or descend, Y Ravine led in 1915 to a bathing-place for men in the north-west sector of Helles. As to the bluff, the best view of it is to be had from the top of the projection in the centre of the photograph. The feature owes its name to the climb which the Ghurkas made up its rugged flanks from Y Beach on the night of May 12th, 1915.

Ravines, and their separating ridges, to Fusilier Bluff and Sari Tepe.

Continuing my walk to Fusilier Bluff, I passed Douglas Street and Essex Street West, and went along the tops of the Western Mule Track. Behind this track are Inniskilling and Forward Inches, Manchester Street, Colne Street and Post; but, well known as these and the other trenches at Helles were in 1915, to-day they are deserted and crumbling, with nothing to distinguish one from the other.

The Western Mule Track is four feet deep, and too rough for walking along. I found nothing to remind me of those evenings in 1915 when we passed through it on our way home: when sunset was followed by pearl-green twilight, and a full moon was rising; when summer lightning flashed, and "strays" whined between us and the stars. Some readers may remember how the Western Mule Track was haunted, where a coat-sleeve and the thin bones of a skeleton hand, white in the moonlight, stuck out from the side.

I came to Salford, Rochdale, and Bury Echelons, disturbing a snake on my way. Behind the echelons, Sikh Road led to the Western Birdcage and various saps. Litter was thick round the Echelons. There were bombs, periscopes, tin linings of S.A.A. boxes, mess-tins, Maconochie tins, other tins, rum-jars—broken or whole, but empty—curls of barbed wire, a sniper's shield, pickheads, shovels, a long, thin bayonet bent and twisted, rotten leather pouches and scabbards, shell cases, bullets, shrapnel balls, iron splinters, rifle-barrels, and some water-bottle corks whose deficiency-returns used to be demanded by unimaginative Staff-Captains at inconvenient times.

The western section of the British firing-line passed over Fusilier Bluff, and ended on the shore below. Apart from that, the Bluff is not remarkable in any way, and has no striking features. From it I could see the Anzac Hills and Suvla Point away in the distance beyond Sari Tepe.

Those who passed the high places of Western Helles, in 1915, saw many wooden crosses silhouetted against Ægean sunsets; but the remains of the men whose resting-places these crosses marked have been taken from the wild bluffs, and to-day lie in gardens of peace and beauty.

Krithia Nullah

We will start this walk from Clapham Junction, and go through one mile of the water-course to our objective—a small corner of the August battlefield near the Fork—comparing, on our way, Krithia Nullah as it is now with the Krithia Nullah of 1915, when it was one of the main roads of Helles, with trenches on either side.

The reader knows that Eski Line crossed the Nullah a quarter-of-a-mile from Clapham Junction, that No. 2 Australian Line and Redoubt Line touched it further on, that between Redoubt and the Fork were Ardwick Green, Great Western Road, and Clunes Vennel on the west, and Wigan Road and Renfield Street on the east, and that the Nullah served them all.

To-day Clapham Junction is deserted, and its features are overgrown with vegetation. But in 1915.... It is the Market-place of Helles. A large wooden cross, with smaller crosses round it, stands at the point where the nullahs

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meet. Close by are dumps of ammunition, stores, clothing, and equipment from dead and wounded. Near some horse-shelters in the nullah-side are the water-carts of local units, where men wait in queues for their turns to fill their own water-bottles, and as many others as they can carry ; for in trenches where no air circulates there are many parched lips caked with dust, waiting impatiently to drink warm water flavoured with chloride of lime.

Ragged bandaged men go along the path, in the yellow dusty heat of a summer's day at Helles. When shrapnel bursts over the nullah, more dust is raised by the scattered balls. In the low nullah-sides there are shallow dug-outs, open at the front and top, or with ground-sheets pegged over them. Here live quartermasters, staffs, and others who have business at the Junction. . . .

Choked With Vegetation

To-day, in our mile of Nullah, there is a small trickle of water in the stream, and by its side there are traces of a path which we can follow ; but, where it is not continuous we must make our way through scrub on the sides or tops. Trees, bushes, and tufts of coarse grass cover the rough banks, and in places the Nullah is choked by thick growth. We are going through wild country, where the rains and torrents of winter and the growth of spring have done much to help Krithia Nullah to return to its natural state.

In all this desolation it is pleasant to find small pools where the stream has widened, and to see in them the reflections of blue sky and green surroundings. I found only one sign of human activity in the Nullah—a patch of cultivation where a few olive-trees were growing. Close by were tins, rotted and half-buried groundsheets, and a piece of wire-netting holding up the crumbling side of a shelter.

In open country, Eski, Redoubt, and other trenches are easily found, but in Krithia Nullah, where the sides are overgrown and crumbling, identification is difficult, even with the help of a map. I noticed several depressions in the bank-tops, near the sites of trenches well known in 1915, but nothing to remind me of our lines when we knew them as clean cuttings.

Near Redoubt there is a waterfall and also a deep pool where frogs splash and swim, where tall rushes grow from the muddy slime, where flies swarm round us, and there is a stagnant, unpleasant smell. The surroundings are full of tins, and above the fall a piece of rusty iron lies in the water.

The Nullah in 1915

In 1915 we know this same Nullah from many points of view. It is a highway, where battalions of weary men crawl along the narrow path, going up to the front line. Almost every man is bandaged on hands, fingers, and legs. They carry picks and spades, or boxes of rations, as well as khaki bandoliers, rifles, and equipment. Some carry

Photo : Alec Riley.

FUSILIER BLUFF AND SARI TEPE

Unlike Ghurka Bluff, Fusilier Bluff is not a prominent feature. This part of Helles is very exposed, and the rains have washed down much of the soil —the terrain being in any case of an exceedingly friable nature. The scrub is thick, and walking consequently difficult. In 1915 the extreme left of the British firing-line ended on the lower slope of Fusilier Bluff, which in this photograph is in the foreground, with Sari Tepe beyond.

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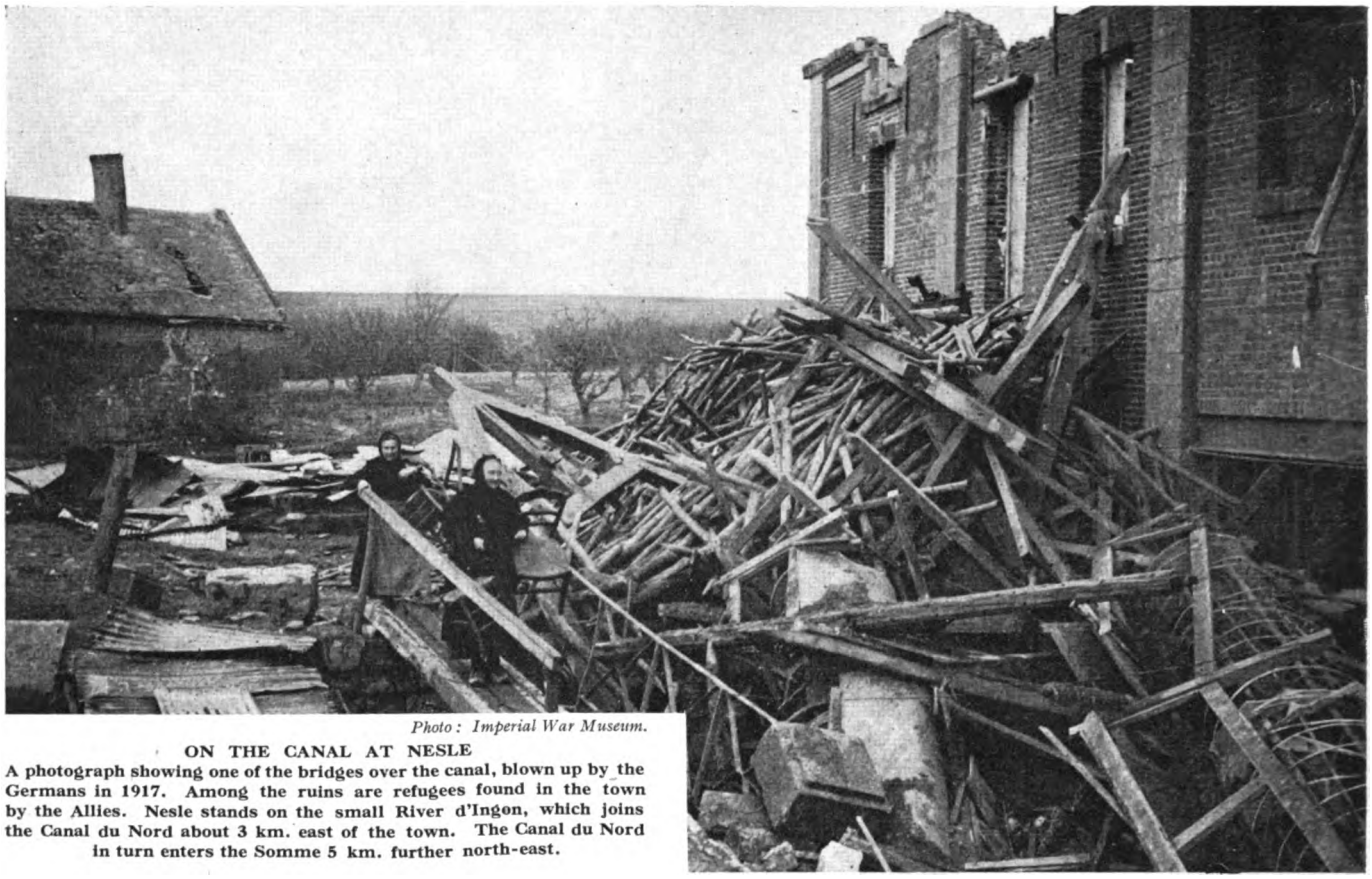
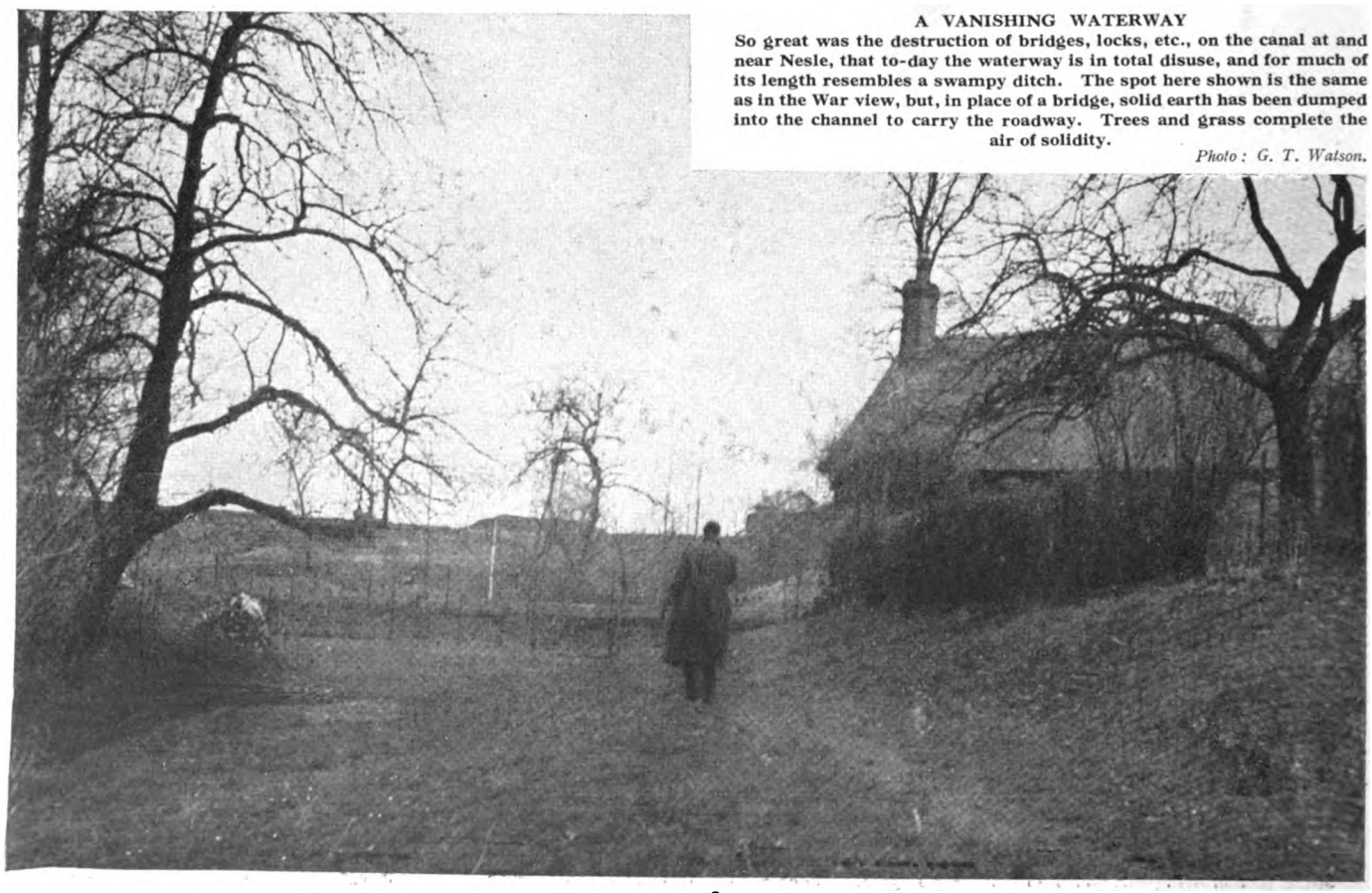


Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON THE CANAL AT NESLE

A photograph showing one of the bridges over the canal, blown up by the Germans in 1917. Among the ruins are refugees found in the town by the Allies. Nesle stands on the small River d'Ingon, which joins the Canal du Nord about 3 km. east of the town. The Canal du Nord in turn enters the Somme 5 km. further north-east.



A VANISHING WATERWAY

So great was the destruction of bridges, locks, etc., on the canal at and near Nesle, that to-day the waterway is in total disuse, and for much of its length resembles a swampy ditch. The spot here shown is the same as in the War view, but, in place of a bridge, solid earth has been dumped into the channel to carry the roadway. Trees and grass complete the air of solidity.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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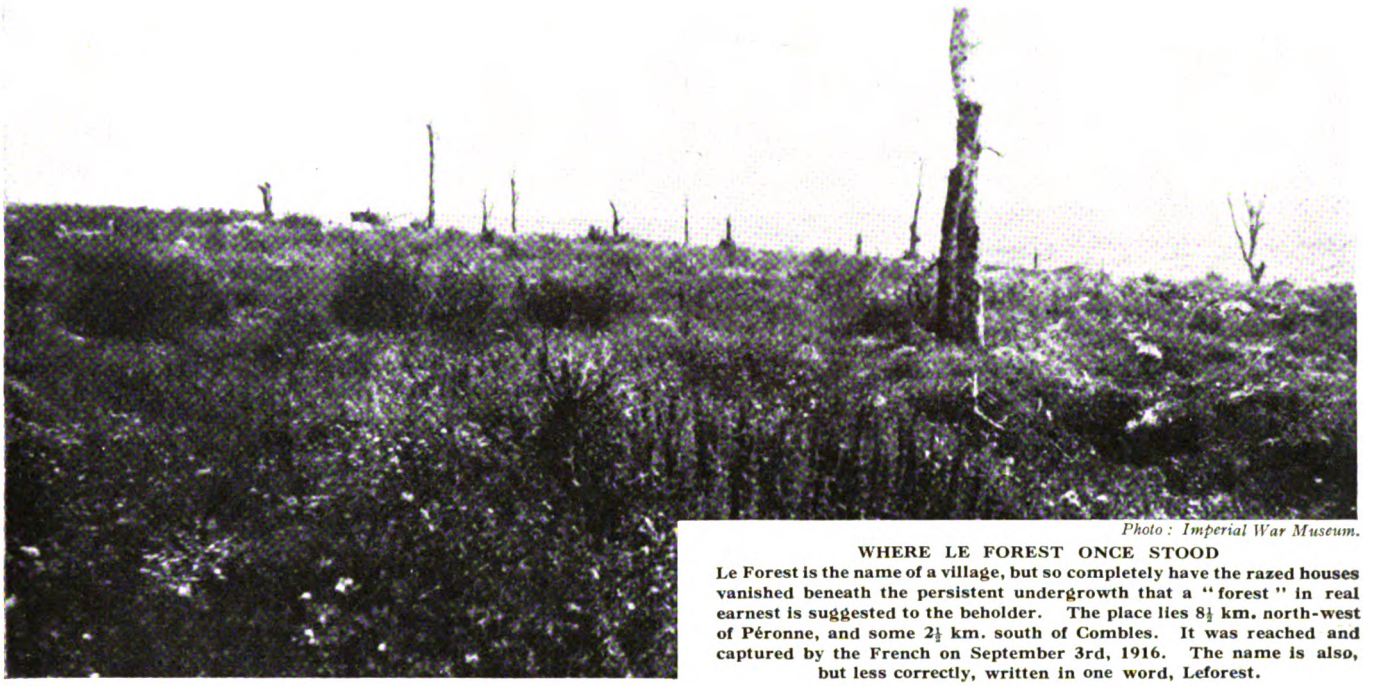


Photo : Imperial War Museum.

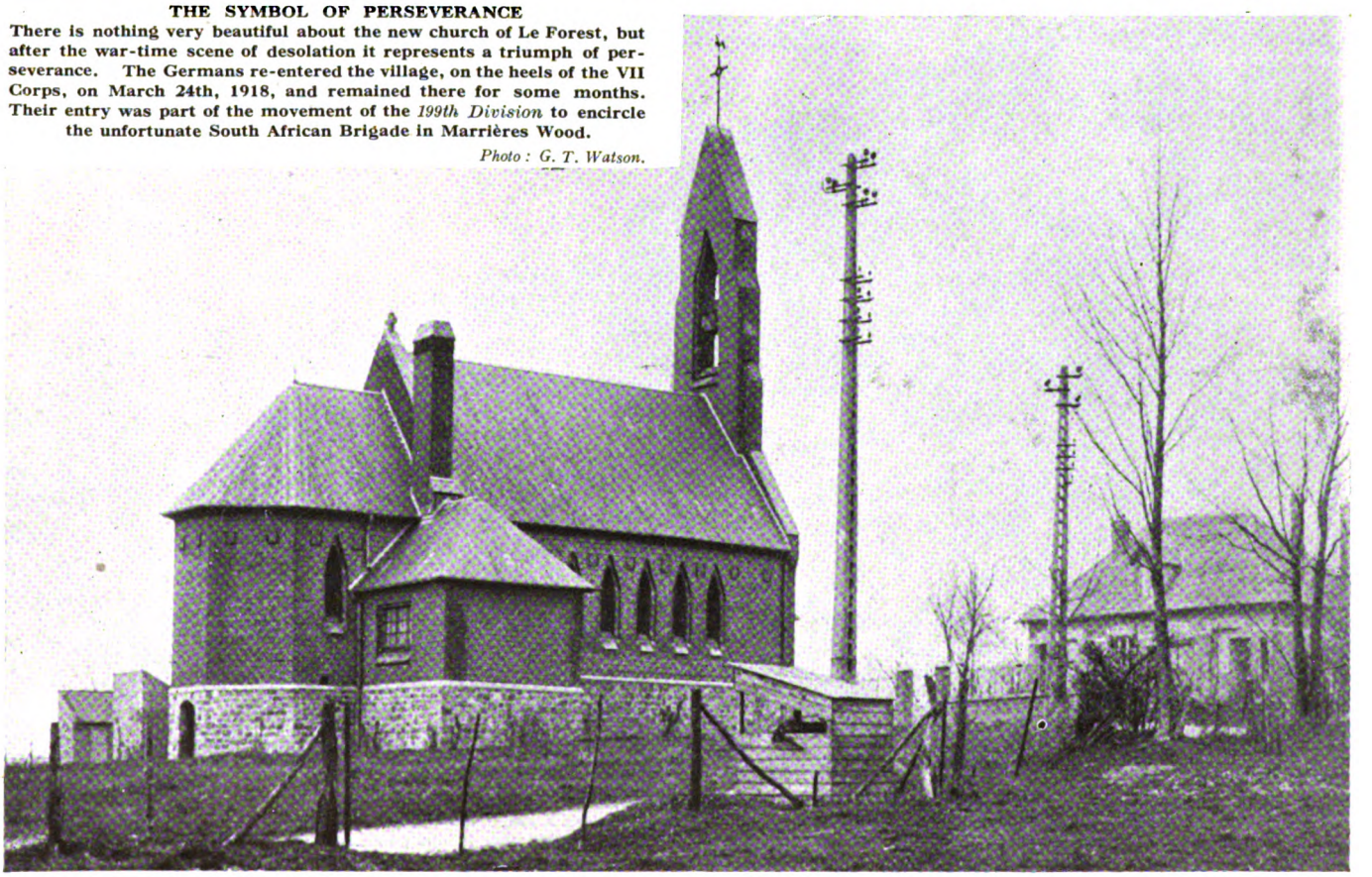
WHERE LE FOREST ONCE STOOD

Le Forest is the name of a village, but so completely have the razed houses vanished beneath the persistent undergrowth that a "forest" in real earnest is suggested to the beholder. The place lies 8½ km. north-west of Péronne, and some 2½ km. south of Combles. It was reached and captured by the French on September 3rd, 1916. The name is also, but less correctly, written in one word, Leforest.

THE SYMBOL OF PERSEVERANCE

There is nothing very beautiful about the new church of Le Forest, but after the war-time scene of desolation it represents a triumph of perseverance. The Germans re-entered the village, on the heels of the VII Corps, on March 24th, 1918, and remained there for some months. Their entry was part of the movement of the *199th Division* to encircle the unfortunate South African Brigade in Marrières Wood.

Photo : G. T. Watson.



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" flying-pigs " on their backs, to a trench mortar dump near the firing-line ; and others are carrying boxes of S.A.A.

Down the Nullah come stretcher-bearers, peering through sweat as they seek level bits of ground. Their wounded burdens are wrapped in brown blankets. Sometimes the victim rests his head on his hands and smokes a cigarette ; sometimes his face is covered with his helmet, or a cap-comforter is pulled over his eyes, and all we can see is the lower part of a grey face. Sometimes he turns his head to look at those he is leaving, but not as though he can see them; and sometimes he lies quite still. If the blanket covers him from head to foot he will soon be buried.

There are many graves on the nullah-sides marked by crosses made from twigs and bootlaces or string, and better ones made from strips of packing-case, so that the name can be carved neatly with a penknife, or printed with indelible pencil.

In an hour there will be a new cross further up the Nullah, where some ragged figures stand near a stretcher, and a shallow grave holds the body of a friend. In the scorching sun these men are holding their helmets over their necks while the padre reads a short service.

We are always thirsty ; but we know some springs where water trickles from the nullah-banks. Going up or down, we call at each watering-place, even at those marked by boards with " Unfit for Drinking," where we can smell the dead buried close by. We splash through mud to one of these springs, where the water fills a hollow in the soil. Someone has left an old jam-tin by the side. As we ladle a tinful of water, the rest is muddied ; but we drink it, thick or clear.

We clean ourselves in shallow pools of dirty nullah-water, and sometimes we pretend to bath, soaping our bodies and throwing water over one another from a mess-tin, or a canvas bucket found and kept.

Here and there we know deeper pools fed by small waterfalls, and to stand under one of these falls is the height of toilet luxury at Helles; but there are times when we hear a crack, and looking up see a puff of smoke against the blue sky, while the balls splash the water; and feeling very naked we make for the side and our lousy clothes, for we may be unlucky if the Turks should send another round. There are places where the nullah is marked by Turk snipers ; and one of their favourites is the side of a waterfall, where a plank takes the path to a higher level.

The Chill that Follows Sunset

The chalky cliff is tinged with a delicate pink in the sunset glow. After sunset the air may be chilly, and we shall need our tunics. Those who have cut off their shirt-sleeves above the elbows, or cut their trousers down to shorts, wonder if coolness by day is worth coldness by night.

It is dusk. Lights twinkle on the nullah-sides, and in the still air blue

Photo : Alec Riley.

COAST ROAD BETWEEN X AND GULLY BEACHES

Gully Beach, as all who were in Gallipoli in 1915 will remember, is situated between X and Y Beaches, slightly less than a mile north of the former, which in this view is behind the central cape. The coast road used to be a great highway for troops going to and from Great Gully, but nowadays the cliff has fallen in many places, and walking over the heaped stones is far from easy.

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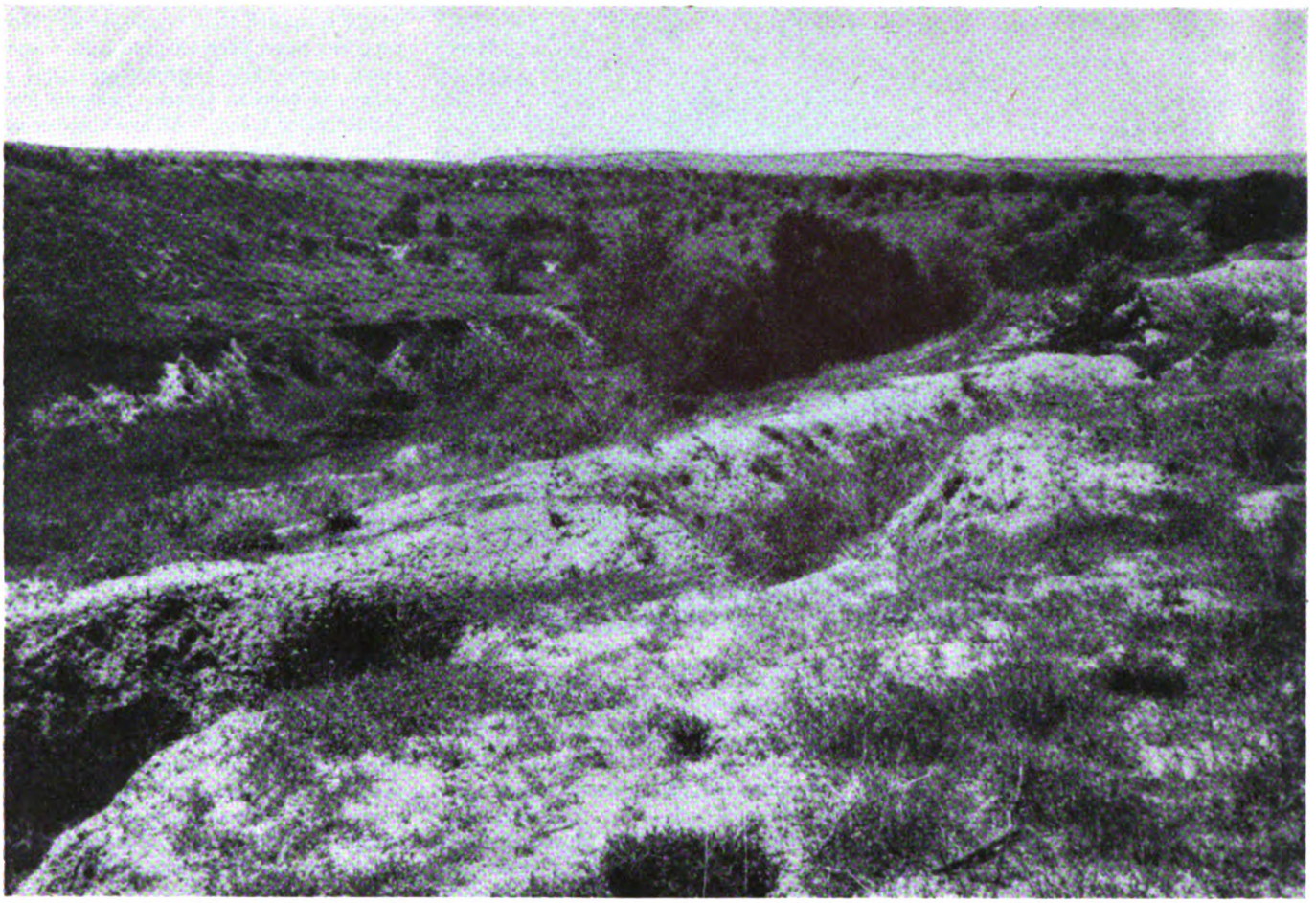

Photo: Alec Riley.

MEMORIES OF JUNE 4TH, 1915

Here the camera is looking down upon the upper part of Krithia Nullah over the June 4th battlefield, while Helles Memorial—all but invisible in the reproduction—stands upon the horizon, immediately above the dark bush near the centre of the photograph. On June 4th, 1915, was fought the Third Battle of Krithia, in which the initial attack was carried out by, from right to left, a French corps, the 2nd Naval Brigade (63rd Division), the 127th (Manchester) Brigade 42nd Division), the 88th Brigade, and the Indian brigade. To these were opposed the Turkish *12th* and *9th Divisions*.

smoke ascends from tiny fires of pine-cones and heather-roots. There is a pleasant smell from these wood fires. Round them sit little groups of men drinking their evening tea, and talking about matters of importance.

We belong to one of these groups, and we set about discussing rations, unfounded rumours of relief, and still more unfounded rumours about going home. As we drink our tea we hear a splash. A large water-turtle has dropped from his cliff to the stream below, disturbing the frogs, which for a time croak louder and more insistently.

It is dark now, and glow-worms show their lights. We hear the clink of picks and shovels, from a working party coming up the Nullah. A few hours ago these men had gone down to rest—and now they have come back to spend the night digging near the firing-line. Some of them will not come down again, but will stay where they are buried, and new crosses will be needed in the morning.

Now and then we hear the rattle of machine guns and the crackle of rifles. Bullets whine over the Nullah, tearing through scrub or ripping up the ground. The nearer trees are black against the glow of flares in the front lines. . . .

Thus it was in 1915.

A Host of Relics

Continuing my recent walk through the Nullah, I came to the Fork, where East and West Krithia Nullahs diverge; and here lay two rifle-barrels, bent and twisted, bombs, a live shell, lead, and litter. Beyond the Fork the country is wild, and there are waterfalls in the sides of the branching nullahs, where cliffs, trees, and scrub make it difficult to explore the surroundings.

For a quarter-of-a-mile the two nullahs are 200 yards apart; after that the distance between them increases. The last Turkish firing-line is 200 yards north of the Fork, crossing both nullahs.

To the left of West Krithia Nullah are two trenches, known officially as H11a and H11b. H11a follows the course of the Nullah until it meets the shorter H11b at right-angles. In the August battle, the last one of importance at Helles, some of the hardest fighting concerned these two trenches and the Vineyard, 400 yards away on the far side of the nullah-fork.

Near H11b, I found a shallow depression, with barbed wire still hanging on posts, backed by a seven-foot bank.

As I sat near H11a, smoking a cigarette in this quiet spot, where the light earth of ancient parapets was the only sign that I was on the battlefields of June and August, I looked back toward our old lines, and recalled the inside of a trench. . . .

August, 1915: on the parapet-midden are tins, coils of barbed-wire, clips, bits of wood and other rubbish. We hear metallic clinks when bullets hit the tins. The heat is intense, for the sun reaches every corner of Helles, and a man is

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A TRENCH NEAR THE ECHELONS *Photo: Alec Riley.*

There were three "echelons," named respectively "Bury," "Rochdale," and "Salford," all situated between Trolley Ravine and Fusilier Bluff. They were reached by the Western Mule Track. In this photograph a coil of barbed wire can be seen near the skyline, with sundry posts, still upright, to left of it. In the bottom of the trench are a sniper's shield and a broken S.A.A. box.

lucky if he can find six inches of shade cast by a trench-side. Fat green flies buzz round our faces, or defile our food. By day no breeze comes to this place; by night, damp air brings the smell of corpses. When we look over the parapet we see a brown and ugly landscape; and we see, also, many of the dead lying in the open.

Friday, August 6th, 1915

It is Friday, the 6th of the month. Our guns open fire at half-past two. There is a whizz of shells and bullets overhead; and when the Turks answer, the air about us quivers and the ground shudders with explosions. We hear the muffled pops of our trench-mortars, see the "pigs" wobble upwards, steady themselves, drop on Turkish positions, and burst with long, horizontal crimson flashes. Then, while we shake and rock in sympathy with our surroundings, bits of hot metal, clusters of balls in smoking grease, showers of earth, and slower dust fall into our trench. White smoke hangs over the torn foreground, and through it our men go forward. Coils of barbed wire appear and disappear in the smoke.

There is a dressing-station at a trench-junction 10 yards from us. When the attacks start, the M.O. and his orderlies wait for such of the wounded as can manage to reach it. A few seats have been cut in the trench-side, and the M.O. has opened his case of instruments.

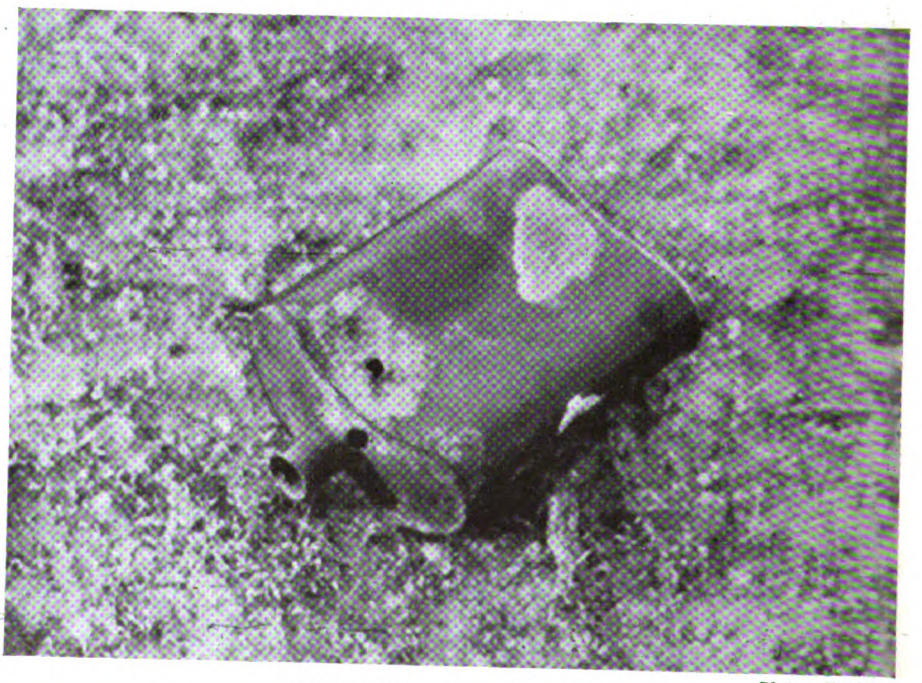
Wounded men come down, singly at first, and then in one long procession—many of them supporting others more badly wounded than themselves. Most of them have been in mud and water; some have little clothing on; that of others is torn to shreds, hanging from shoulders or waist. All are bloody, and there are blood-soaked dressings on heads, arms, hands, and legs.

The M.O. works hard and quickly, but he cannot cope with the numbers. Men sit on the earth seats, staring, but not seeing; others are deaf and dumb; others are muttering or shaking in every limb. One crawls past us on one knee and his hands, dragging a useless leg. Another's face is a red mask, and only his eyes show through it. Stretchers are filled time after time, and carried slowly down a winding narrow trench crowded with men.

Shells burst close by, and the dressing-station is full of smoke and fumes. The M.O. looks round, but no one has been hit.

The noise is deafening, but there is a louder crash when a "pig" bursts in a nearby Turkish line, throwing up clothing, timbers, and papers, which flutter down in the smoke.

Saturday, August 7th: another bombardment, and an assault by composite parties, on H11a and H11b. Once more heads ache with noise and strain. Once more the sun glares through stifling air. Once more light cases come to the dressing-station, while earth



STILL LYING WHERE IT FELL *Photo: Alec Riley.*

What story is there behind this bullet-pierced water-bottle, lying after more than twenty years as though dropped but a few months ago? Only the absence of its felt jacket, which alone has been obliterated by time, betrays the length of its sojourn on the lonely spur-top between Gully Ravine and the sea. Not far from this bottle were two or three others, their blue enamel easily seen amid the green and brown of the landscape.

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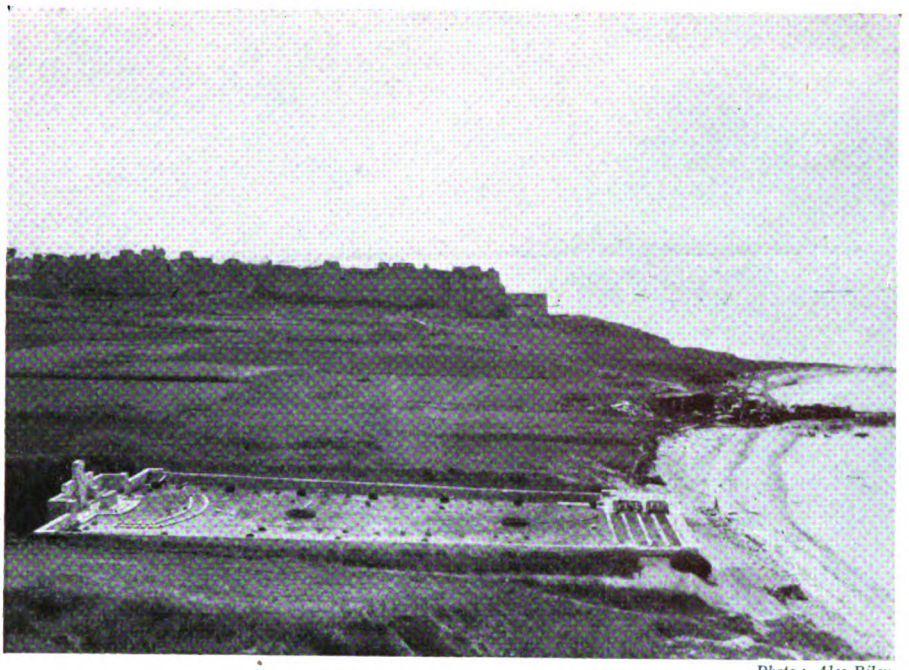

Photo: Alec Riley.

V BEACH AND V BEACH CEMETERY

This cemetery was begun and ended, so far as burials in 1915 were concerned, during the period April—May, but a few other graves were added after the Armistice. The burials include those of 500 United Kingdom soldiers and sailors and a number of unidentified dead. Cypresses, pines, and tamarisks now grow outside the cemetery walls on all but the shore side.

descends through yellow stinking fumes. Once more wounded men lie in front of the trench they have left, scorched by the sun, and not daring to move until night, when some of them may be able to crawl back to our lines.

Laughter Rarely Heard

It is Saturday afternoon. Trenches are crowded with worn-out men, lousy and unwashed for days, who sleep where they can find room to lie; and we must tread carefully so as not to disturb them. A few men slouch past, thin, round-shouldered, eyes dulled, bandaged on hands or legs, full of septic sores. They cannot be cured on Gallipoli, but dressing-stations are busy with iodine and lint. There is little talking, and, although Helles has had its humour, laughter is rarely heard now.

A young subaltern comes to us asking for food, and while we give him all we have—broken biscuits, jam, and water—he tells us that there is no food in his part of the line.

We know the results of the fighting on our small front, but nothing about events on either side of it, until news comes that our men are holding a captured trench alongside the Vineyard, and a good part of the Vineyard itself, where bombing and fighting have gone on day and night, and where Helles has indeed been hot.

On Sunday morning the firing-line tells a plain story. Between its shattered walls are broken entrenching-tools, bullet-riddled equipment torn and stained, jagged iron, shell-cases, broken ammunition-boxes, clips of S.A.A., stained stretchers; and from this bloody litter we take such things as we need. Then, on Field Service postcards, we cross out those statements which do not apply....

In the future, a visitor to Lala Bala Cemetery at Suvla will find these words inscribed on the gate-piers:

"Near this spot the IX Army Corps landed on the night of the 6th–7th August, 1915."

For that is what has happened while those at Helles have been fighting....

But in the trenches of central Helles there is no shade from the August sun, and the men who hold them are tormented by flies and lice; while over them hangs the heavy scent of death....

The Monument at Helles

My cigarette was finished, and it was time to leave the solitudes of nullah and disappearing ditch, where now the only life is that of wild creatures, and the only changes are those of the seasons.

On Gueji Baba, a hill 150 feet above sea-level, and the highest point in this part of Gallipoli, stands the Helles Memorial. This is an appropriate site, for near it the original British landing was made and the last troops were evacuated.

The monument is more than 100 feet high, and consists of an obelisk rising from the centre of a square platform nearly eight feet above ground

Photo: Alec Riley.

REDOUBT CEMETERY

A view of the cemetery looking toward Helles, whose memorial may just be discerned on the skyline to the left of the nearest cypress. Many of those killed in the Third Battle of Krithia, on June 4th, 1915, are buried here. The cemetery is beautifully laid out, and its immediate vicinity is also orderly and trim; but further afield the country is wild and untouched—a striking contrast.

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Photo: Alec Riley.

AMONG THE RUINS OF KRITHIA

Krithia in ruins looks like the remains of some huge feudal castle, and is a desolate sight indeed. Fallen stones, hidden in the thick undergrowth, make it a difficult place in which to wander, and care is also needed to avoid a number of deep wells. Outside the confines of the village, there is still to be seen the stump of one of the round windmills which were so well known (from a distance) in 1915.

level. The platform is reached by steps on the south, and is enclosed by a parapet-wall. The sides of obelisk and platform face north, south, east, and west.

Four panels on the lower sides of the obelisk are inscribed: Royal Navy, Anzac, Suvla, and Helles, followed by names of ships, divisions, and brigades concerned in those areas; and each panel faces the general compass-bearing of the area whose name it bears at the top. The detailed compositions of these larger formations, and the names of smaller units, are inscribed on the parapet-wall facing each side of the obelisk.

Carved on panels set in the outer side of the wall are the names of some 21,000 sailors and soldiers from the Home Countries, India, and Newfoundland, who were lost or buried in Gallipoli waters, or who died on the Peninsula at Helles, Anzac, and Suvla, and who lie in unknown graves. Names of 248 Australians who fell at the Second Battle of Krithia are included. The Australian and New Zealand dead are commemorated by their own memorials in other parts of Gallipoli.

The Helles Monument, therefore, serves two purposes. It is a record of the whole campaign, so far as the forces of the Empire were concerned, and a memorial to many thousands of those over whose bodies headstones cannot be placed. Designed by the firm of architects, Sir John Burnet, Tait, and Horne, it is to Gallipoli what the Menin Gate is to the Ypres Salient; and on this carefully chosen site it is seen to advantage from both land and sea.

Evening is the best time to inspect it, for then the stone no longer reflects the sun's glare. From the platform, surrounded by names of ships, regiments, and men, we look over the parapet to the blue Dardanelles, the roadsteads where fleet and transports lay, Lancashire Landing Cemetery, the tops of gully, bluff, and ravine, Achi Baba and the nearer country of nullahs and battlefields, and to black Imbros and Samothrace between red sky and red shining sea.

Gallipoli Cemeteries To-day

Strategic and spectacular characteristics made the Gallipoli Campaign stand out from the rest of the Great War, of which it was as much a part as the fighting on any other front; and to-day, memorial and cemeteries, although different from those of other fronts, are links in the same world-wide chain of Empire graves.

Pilgrimages to Gallipoli have been made, tourists have landed from steamers to spend a few hours on the Peninsula, and occasionally someone has found time and opportunity to visit it alone; but, apart from these, there are few who know what the architects and the Imperial War Graves Commission have done on this rugged corner of Europe.

The reader is asked to recall the graves of Helles, isolated or in groups, on battlefields, shores, and gully sides, as they were in the early days of the campaign, when they were marked by crosses made from any bits of wood obtainable; and how these primitive

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Photo : Alec Riley.

IN ACHI BABA NULLAH

Although Krithia and Achi Baba Nullahs are not widely separated, they are noticeably different in character, and, of the two, Achi Baba Nullah is the pleasanter. Its southern portion is, in truth, a delightful place in spring ; the grass is shorter and greener than in most parts of Helles, there are plenty of trees and flowers, and the trickle of the stream may be heard. This photograph comes from higher up, where the nullah is wider.

crosses were replaced by others of regulation pattern, also of wood.

Instead of these scattered groups, there are to-day six British cemeteries, known as V Beach, Lancashire Landing, Pink Farm, Twelve Tree Copse, Redoubt, and Skew Bridge, each having its name inscribed on the gate-piers. There were small cemeteries on or near these places in 1915, and how they were made and increased by concentrations is described in the official records of the Imperial War Graves Commission.

Except from certain beaches, gullies, and low ground, there are few places in the British area from which the obelisk and one or more cemeteries are not visible ; and as their pines and cypresses grow taller, the cemeteries grow more into the landscape. It is difficult to realise the time, skill, and labour spent in planning and construction ; but if we stand on the walls at Pink Farm or Redoubt, and look over the scrubby wastes of trenched battlefields on all sides, remembering that out of such chaos these places have been made, we begin to understand what it has meant to change the wilderness into gardens of cultivated beauty.

Similar in general outline, each cemetery was specially designed and given its own characteristics. The gates of Indian teak were made in England, where also the headstones of Hopton Wood stone were cut and inscribed.

Water has to be carried to these spots ; and through severe weather and parching summer heat they have every possible attention from the gardeners, and constant supervision by the Area Superintendent. English grass is not suitable for the lawns, so local couch-grass, which is green in summer and brown in winter, has been planted.

By Krithia Road

I will now ask the reader to imagine that he is standing on high ground off the rising bend of Krithia Road, looking down on Skew Bridge Cemetery, which stands between Krithia and Kilid Bahr Roads, 50 yards from the Dere over which the former was carried by a wooden skew-bridge.

The cemetery is just behind the centre of the Allied line across the Peninsula of April 27th, 1915, and it came into being after the Second Battle of Krithia, May 6th–8th. Although used throughout the occupation, it contained only a few bodies until after the Armistice, when others were brought in from certain points and battlefields. Outside the walls are belts of ilex, while cypresses, rosemary, and blue irises grow among the graves. In the afternoon the sun shines full on the Memorial against its background of pines.

To this contrast between white stone and the dark and light greens of trees and lawn, the reader must add a deep blue sky and the colours of wild flowers and butterflies around him. He must hear the sounds of the countryside—the songs of birds, the lowing of cattle, the call of a peasant, the barking of dogs in the distant village, and the nearer rumble of a country cart ; for these make up the setting of Skew Bridge Cemetery in springtime.

In the still evening air we hear the tinkle of cattle-bells, and the footsteps of country people coming down the track in Achi Baba Nullah with their donkeys, cows, and goats. It is dusk in the quiet nullah, and in the west Pink Farm ridge is black against the red glow of sunset.

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CHAPTER LXXVI

THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE SOMME

The year 1918 contained two "black days," one for the British and one for the Germans. Ludendorff may be presumed still to remember August 8th, concerning which he wrote that it "was the black day of the German Army in the history of this war. . . . The Emperor told me later on, after the failure of the July offensive and after August 8th, he knew the war could no longer be won." The British passed through their ordeal somewhat earlier. On March 21st, thirty-seven divisions of German infantry, supported by nearly 6,000 guns, fell upon the British line of battle on the front of the Fifth Army. The Fifth Army recoiled, but it did not break, and to sacrifices made by the men of this Army and to the resolute defence put up a few weeks later in Flanders is due most of the credit for the final victory towards the end of the year.

"FOUR-FORTY A.M.! How well many Englishmen still recall that misty hour on the 21st March, 1918, when 6,000 German guns, ranged on the plains of Picardy, roared their mighty challenge, and for hour after hour hurled an incredible tonnage of shell on to doomed positions. It was the outset of one of the greatest military dramas in our history."[1] Winston Churchill, indeed, described it as without exception "the greatest onslaught in the history of the world."[2]

Good-bye to the British!

"The issues involved were greater than many of us perhaps remember. On the third day of battle Clemenceau advised the French President to withdraw the Government to Bordeaux; and, on the same night, calculations were being feverishly worked out for the embarkation at Channel ports of the remainder of the British Army."[3]

The bombardment lasted 5 hours. At first it was directed mainly against headquarters, signal-centres, and battery-positions. The net of cable-communications, and the wireless-stations, on which the direction of battle depends in position-warfare, were wrecked early in the day. A thick fog prevailed. The vast number of gas-shell fired enforced the wearing of masks and enhanced the blindness caused by the fog. Some 3,500 trench-mortars battered the forward posts out of existence. Such were the preliminaries of battle.

At 9.30 a.m. the infantry assault was launched. The enemy quickly crossed the front lines, and, dropping detachments to deal with the intervening redoubts, passed on to the attack of the Battle Zone, whose garrisons had been hurried into position by the appropriate code-word "Bustle" at the opening of the bombardment.

The redoubts, standing out as islands in a sea of swarming assailants, were defended heroically for hours—in some cases, for days; and this defence had a marked effect in slowing down the rate of the hostile advance. But all were eventually captured. In the Fifth Army, out of 37 battalions in the Forward Zone, it is doubtful if the equivalent of 10 battalions escaped. At one stroke the defenders lost between a quarter and a third of their infantry—the arm most sorely needed at this crisis.

The prevalence of fog, always highly embarrassing to those on the defensive, was peculiarly unfortunate on this occasion. The "blob" system, on which plans were based, depended for its efficiency on cross-fire between dispersed posts, and was certain to fail when the view of riflemen and machine-gunners was limited to a few yards. Moreover, the signals sent up from the front line, which had been wont to bring down a curtain of protective fire even at night, were invisible in the fog.

Fog Thicker in the South

Then, too, there was that terrible difficulty of distinguishing friend from foe, which so often causes men to withhold their fire until too late. And finally, aeroplanes—the readiest form of re-inforcement—were unable for some hours to perform their duties. The fog was far thicker in the south than in the north; and, consequently, the Fifth Army suffered much more from its effects than did the Third.

The defence of the redoubts in the Forward Zone provides many pages of glorious history. Manchester Hill, defended by the 16th Manchesters, furnishes a shining example. Lieut.-Col. Elstob was in command. "On taking over the defence of this post, he had already impressed on his battalion that there is only one degree of resistance, and that to the last round and to the last man. At about 11 a.m., Colonel Elstob reported to his brigade that the Germans were swarming round his redoubt. At about 2 p.m., he said that most of his men were killed or wounded, that nearly all were dead-beat, that the Germans had got into the redoubt and hand-to-hand fighting was going on. He was still quite cheery.

"At 3.30 p.m., he answered a call on the telephone and said that very few were left and the end was nearly come. After that, communication ceased. Wounded three times, using his revolver and throwing bombs himself, he was last seen on the fire-step, and when called on to surrender by Germans within 30 yards, replied 'Never,' upon which he was shot dead.

"Before the battered position fell, the Germans had brought up field guns to within 60 yards of the redoubt."[1]

The front of attack included the whole of the line manned by the Fifth Army, and half of that manned by the Third. The bombardment, however, extended north to part of the First Army front, and in the south even hammered the French lines in Champagne. Against the former it soon died down; but against the latter it was maintained for several days, keeping Pétain continually anxious about an attack on this front.

It is interesting to note that Ludendorff, whose strategy in this battle has been much decried, managed by secrecy and a fine exercise of artifice, to concentrate 63 divisions against, approximately, 26; whereas the French, in their greatest attack (under Nivelle), achieved a superiority only of 48 divisions to 40.

[1] Rowan-Robinson, *Belated Comments on a Great Event*, p. 7.
[2] *The World Crisis* (Sandhurst Edition), p. 410.
[3] *Belated Comments*, p. 9.

[1] *The Story of the Fifth Army* (Gough), p. 271

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

REINFORCEMENTS

A column of Australian troops marching toward Albert, and photographed near Fricourt, on March 23rd, 1918. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th Australian Divisions (the last-named less its artillery), together with the New Zealand, 12th, and 62nd Divisions, were on this day all released from the northern half of the British front to reinforce the Third Army.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PROTECTING THE SOMME CROSSINGS

A photograph dated March 24th, 1918, and showing Gordon Highlanders lining a bank in the open while operating in support. It is interesting to note that the causeways, by which alone, almost, the Somme could be crossed in March, 1918, were the same as had furnished the only passage 500 years earlier. In 1415 the French had sought to prevent the crossing of Henry V by digging holes in them; but, as in 1918, the invader was not held.

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III and XVIII Corps

We may now turn to the operations against the various corps in detail, beginning from the right.

In the area of the III Corps, no assault was made against the two brigades of the 58th Division, south of the Oise. The left brigade (the 173rd), and the 18th Division, to the north—which, between them, covered a distance of 7½ miles—were attacked by three divisions. The 14th Division, covering only 2½ miles, was attacked by no less than seven.

On the front of the 173rd Brigade, where the fog lay thickest and the line was thinnest, the scattered posts resisted well. Most of the detachments managed to hold out until midday, and that in the keep at Travécy repulsed assault after assault throughout the whole of the 21st and until 8 p.m. on the 22nd, when lack of ammunition compelled the survivors to surrender.

In the 18th Division, small parties of the 7th Buffs covered themselves with glory, some resisting until late on the 22nd and then fighting their way back to the Battle Zone.

It was against the centre and left of the 14th and the right of the 36th Division that the enemy threw his greatest weight. He broke through in overwhelming strength at the junction of the two divisions, and then sent detachments southward along the rear of the Forward Zone of the 14th Division, with the result that by 9 a.m. he had the whole of the zone in his hands. Unfortunately for us, the high ground there was of vast importance.

The XVIII Corps, with three divisions in line, and faced by 14 German divisions, held a front of 9 miles astride the St. Quentin Canal. Its Forward Zone was strongly developed, consisting of a number of posts about 300 yards apart in the front line, and behind them a row of 14 big redoubts, the latter constituting the line of resistance in the zone.

"There was to be no retirement from this line, which would receive no support from the rear except by counter-attack, which might not be delivered from the Battle Zone for 48 hours. The German assault, however, was pressed forward in the fog so quickly and in such strength that not one man in four of the outpost-line troops got away."[1] The garrisons of several of the redoubts held out, like that of Manchester Hill, long and gallantly.

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 175.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

The majority of horses would shy violently at the spectacle of a carcase of one of their species, but the war-horse early learns indifference to this type of horror. Our photograph, which was taken on March 24th, 1918, shows a scene in Omiécourt, a village on the Péronne—Roye road 16 km. south-west of the former town. Omiécourt, at the time of the March Retreat, was about 10 km. north of the Anglo-French army boundary.

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Photo: Keystone.

CHURCH AND VILLAGE

Omiécourt came under bombardment from the enemy's artillery, during his final advance, on March 25th, 1918, when it constituted part of the area held by the 24th Division (XIX Corps), on the right of the 8th Division. The three brigades of the 24th (17th, 72nd, and 73rd) held the enemy in check all the morning, and not until after 1 p.m., by which time the Germans had turned both flanks, were divisional orders for a retirement issued. This retirement was carried out during the afternoon, the 17th Brigade being forced to evacuate Omiécourt.

XIX and VII Corps

The two divisions of the XIX Corps were assailed by no less than nine hostile divisions, and were driven out of the Forward Zone by 11 a.m.—though, as the German accounts freely attest, not without desperate fighting.

The 8-mile front of the VII Corps was held by three divisions. The 16th, on the right, was so quickly driven in that the troops in the Battle Zone found themselves engaged before they knew that the assault had begun. By 10 a.m., the enemy had even gained a footing in the Battle Zone.

The 21st Division, in the centre, displayed a firmer resistance; but, in spite of some fine fighting on the part of Leicestershire and Northumberland units, it was driven out of the Forward Zone by noon. The 9th Division was not heavily engaged. It lost a few small posts in Gauche Wood, but otherwise maintained its sector intact.

In general, along the whole front of the Fifth Army the Germans had by 11 a.m. swept through the Forward Zone, had almost annihilated its garrison, and were engaging the Battle Zone. By 2 p.m., they had broken into the latter in many places, notably on the dominating Essigny plateau and along the valleys of the Somme, the Omignon, and the Cologne.

General Gough, motoring to the headquarters of his several corps, at 3 p.m. came to the conclusion that he might be forced to fight a battle in retreat; and as a first step he ordered the III Corps to withdraw behind the Crozat Canal.

During the afternoon, the Germans continued their attacks against the 173rd Brigade. They quickly captured Fargniers, on the edge of the Battle Zone, but were driven out by the 2/4th and 3rd London. The attacks were renewed, and the village again captured, only to be retaken by the 3rd London, who counted among their prisoners men from no less than 27 battalions.

To the left, the 18th Division, thanks partly to the staunch resistance, already described, of the 7th Buffs, repulsed several attacks, and, except on the left, where it had to throw back a flank to conform to the retirement of the 14th Division, maintained its position until nightfall. The 14th, under tremendous pressure, had, by nightfall, been completely thrust out of the Battle Zone. It managed, however, with the help of the 5th Dismounted Brigade and a couple of battalions transferred from the south of the Oise, to hang on to a line in rear, and to cover the gap between the 18th and 36th Divisions.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

"HARMAN'S DETACHMENT"

A composite body of men of the 3rd Cavalry Division going forward in support near Nesle on March 24th, 1918. A force of some 700 men of the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, reinforced by 600 infantry, had been formed the preceding day and placed under the 3rd Cavalry Division commander, Major-Gen. Harman, to guard the northern flank of the III Corps. The force at once became known as Harman's Detachment.

At Essigny, Roupy, and Savy

In the XVIII Corps, the Ulstermen on the right threw back a flank, and maintained the Battle Zone almost intact, in spite of losing touch with the 14th Division and being dominated by the Essigny plateau. In the centre, the 2nd Green Howards and the 19th King's put up a fine fight for Roupy, and, after a fierce struggle, managed to retain it. Near Savy, the enemy gained a minor success, but at enormous cost.

Along the Holnon ridge the 61st Division, assisted greatly by a resolute defence of the Enghien Redoubt on the part of the 2/4th Ox. and Bucks, held its line unflinchingly, although the left flank had to be thrown back to face the enemy, who had penetrated along the Omignon valley. This flank was heavily assailed ; and it was here that Lieut.-Colonel Dimmer, V.C., was killed while riding up the valley at the head of a counter-attack.

On the front of the XIX Corps, the 3rd Rifle Brigade, by a magnificent resistance at Cooker's Quarry, prevented the enemy from advancing along the main road until after dark. The 8th Queen's and the 24th Machine Gun Battalion also rendered fine service on this day by holding the high ground at Le Verguier, though fiercely assailed on three sides. Elsewhere, the enemy succeeded in making his way into parts of the Battle Zone.

The right of the VII Corps continued to lose ground until the leading elements of the 39th Division, coming up from reserve, brought the enemy to a halt. Further north, a fine counter-attack by the 15th Durhams recaptured lost ground near Vaucelette—unfortunately, however, losing a fine officer in Lieut.-Colonel Festing, who was leading them.

By nightfall, except for the three main breaches at Essigny and along the Omignon and Cologne valleys, the Battle Zone was in general stoutly held.

In the course of the afternoon, Général Humbert, who had been detailed to take charge of any French formations that might be ordered to operate on the British front, called on Gough to tell him that no troops had as yet been placed at his disposal. "*Je n'ai qu'un fanion*" ("I've nothing but my flag"), he remarked, pointing to the bit of red bunting on his car.

Bridges Blown Up

Gough had ordered the 20th and 39th Divisions forward from reserve ; but he could expect no other reinforcements in the near future. In view of this fact, and

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

NO LONGER NEEDED

A growing pile of "tin hats," rifles, and miscellaneous equipment at a field dressing-station near Bapaume, whither a steady stream of wounded men was arriving on March 23rd, 1918. Bapaume at that time was still some distance behind our front line, the IV Corps occupying the sector east of it. The town had to be abandoned, however, late on the 24th.

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WEST OF LENS

Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

GRENAY BOMBARDED

The village of Grenay lies a short distance to the west of Lens, and about equally far south-east of Nœux-les-Mines. At the time of, and for some while prior to, the Battle of Loos, 1915, it was immediately north of the Franco-British boundary-line, the 47th Division (IV Corps) occupying it. From here, on September 25th, the division moved to the attack on the Double Crassier, the Chalk Pit, and Loos Crassier, all in the possession of the German 22*nd Reserve Regiment*.

Photo: G. T. Watson

GRENAY GROWN ANEW

On September 30th, 1915, five days after the opening of the Loos battle, the 47th Division was relieved in front of Grenay by the French IX Corps (152nd and 17th Divisions) under General Curé. This relief should have taken place two days earlier, but had been delayed by bad weather and the mass of traffic on the roads. Our two photographs show (*top*) a general view of the ruins on October 27th, 1917, and (*below*) the new and enlarged village.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

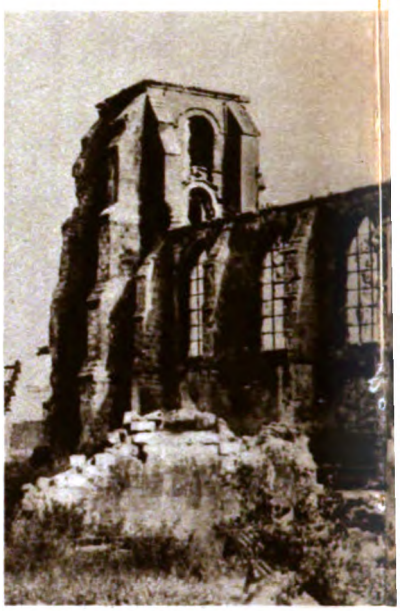
THE WRECKAGE OF AIX-NOULETTE

A photograph of the Grande Rue in the above-named village, which is situated in the Pas-de-Calais department, on the Arras–Bethune road. It is 16 km. north-north-west of Arras, and 7 km. due west of Lens. The picture here reproduced was taken on July 16th, 1917, and shows the principal thoroughfare.

Photo: G. T. Watson

CONTEMPORARY AIX-NOULETTE

The village was for long just behind our lines, and thus became known to an immense number of British soldiers as a haven of alleged "rest." Standing upon fairly high ground, it was subject to frequent heavy shelling, and was also subjected to periodical night-bombing by hostile aircraft. After the Armistice it had to be entirely rebuilt, and bears little resemblance to its pre-war guise.



AIX-NOULETT

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During 1914 and early 1915 the Ger
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Photo: Imperial War Museum

ITE CHURCH

it ends, protested loudly during the iastical buildings, it must be said in asure was to a large extent justified, posts afforded by the towers. Here is n on July 15th, 1917.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

IN DISMANTLED AIX

Aix-Noulette now possesses two British cemeteries. One of these, the Communal Cemetery Extension, was created soon after the taking-over of the sector by the 1st and 2nd Divisions, and was used by fighting units and field ambulances until October, 1918. 492 Canadian, 257 United Kingdom, and 503 French dead are buried here.

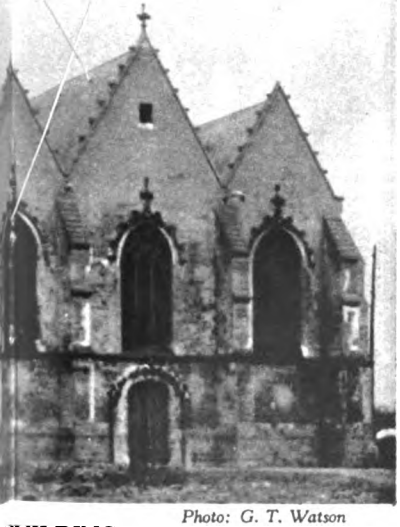

Photo: G. T. Watson

UILDING

man front line ran just east of the of Loos it was at the extreme north eth Army, sandwiched between the ly in 1916 it passed to the keeping Corps.

Photo: G. T. Watson

IN THE RUE DE L'ÉGLISE

The other cemetery at Aix-Noulette is that of the Tranchée de Mecknes, so named by French colonial troops after Mecknes, or Mequinez, in Morocco. Though used by the British from February, 1916, it is much smaller than the Communal Cemetery Extension, and contains the graves of 153 United Kingdom, 45 Canadian, and 2 German fallen.

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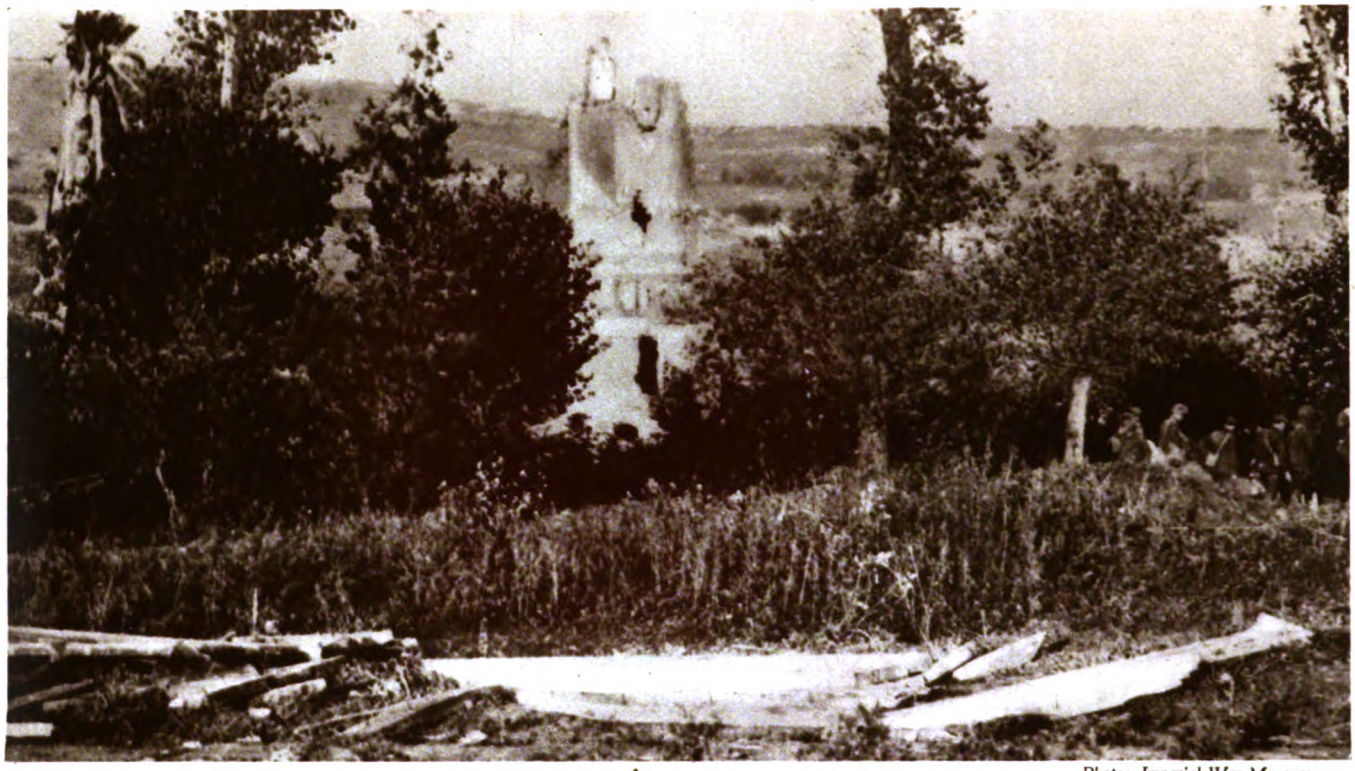

Photo: Imperial War Museum

REMAINS OF THE CHÂTEAU, ABLAIN-ST. NAZAIRE

Ablain-St. Nazaire is again, from the British point of view, a back-area village of relative mediocrity. It holds other associations for the French, however, since it is immediately opposite the northern part of the famous Labyrinth, where there was heavy fighting in the early months of 1915. This aptly-named maze of trenches was so intricate that even men who knew it well easily became lost, and the skirmishing consisted of hand-to-hand attacks with knives, etc., round traverses.

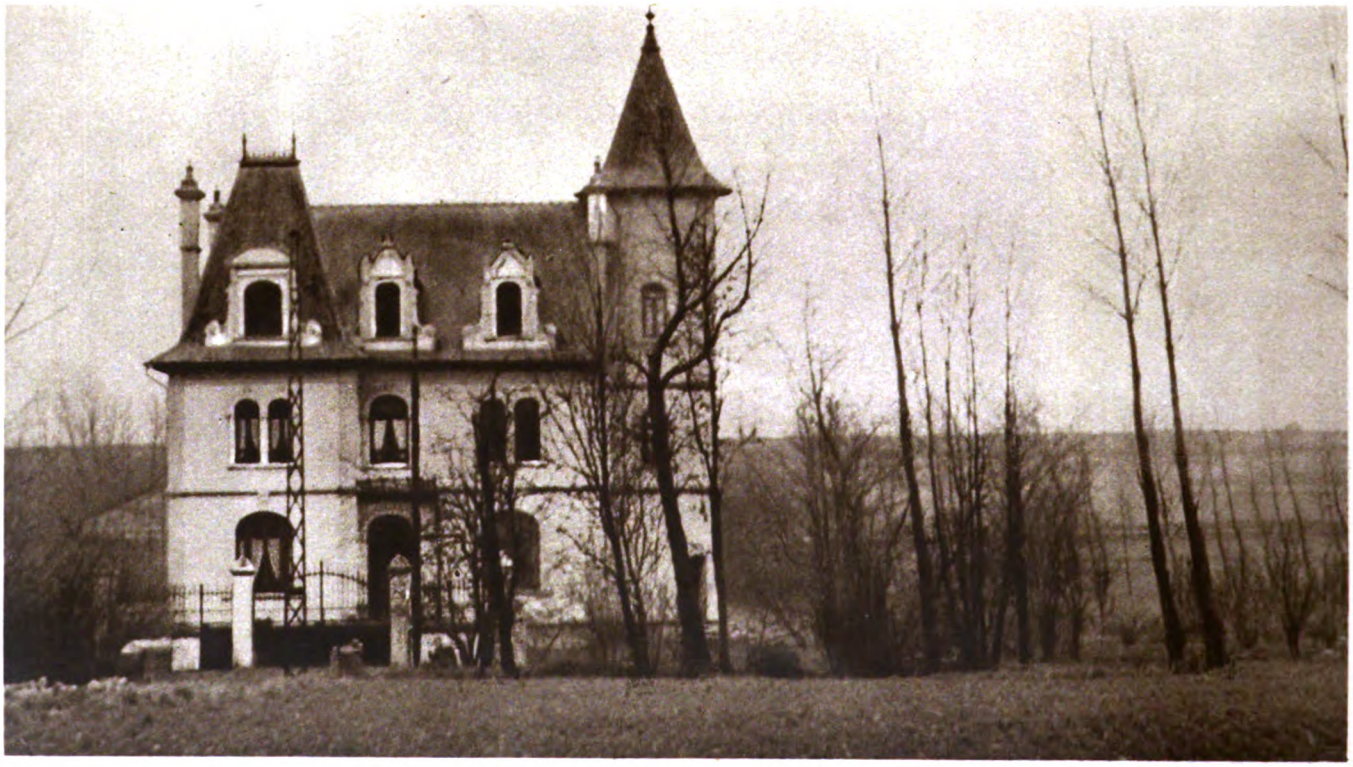

Photo: G. T. Watson

THE ATTRACTIVE NEW CHÂTEAU

Ablain-St. Nazaire, whose geographical position is immediately west of Souchez—almost contiguous to it—and 8 km. west-south-west of Lens, possesses one British cemetery, begun by Canadian troops in April, 1917, and originally named Saskatchewan Cemetery. This name has now been altered to Sucrerie Cemetery, owing to the proximity of one of the numerous sugar-factories to be found in northern France. 220 United Kingdom and 163 Canadian burials are recorded.

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in view of the heavy and sustained pressure being exerted by the enemy, coupled with the reports from our airmen of endless columns moving up in support, he felt fairly sure that he would soon have to beat a retreat to the Somme. As a preliminary step, he ordered his heavy artillery to selected positions behind the Rear Zone from which they could still cover the Battle Zone.

During the night, Butler fell back behind the canal without interference from the enemy. Here he was joined by the 3rd Dismounted Division, containing the 6th, 7th, and Canadian Cavalry Brigades, and by 6 a.m. his troops were across the obstacle. The Sappers then blew up all the road-bridges, leaving the railway-bridges, by request, to the French engineers, who—looking no doubt to the possibility of having to rebuild them in the future—effected such a mild measure of destruction that the Germans were able to make considerable use of them when attempting to force a passage.

The 20th Division had now come up by forced marches in support, but had arrived too late to restore the battle, and could act only as a stop-gap. Had it been stationed, in accordance with Gough's urgent request, nearer the front, it might have been used, together

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

60-POUNDER NEAR LA BOISSELLE

This 60-pounder Mark II battery is seen in action in the open near La Boisselle on March 25th. The village lies but a few kilometres north-east of Albert, on the Bapaume road ; and the fact that by dawn of the 26th our line had fallen back upon Albert itself shows how close up to the infantry our artillery kept during the retirement. The 37th Brigade (12th Division) was the last formation to occupy La Boisselle.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

6-INCH NEAR HÉDAUVILLE

The long barrel of a 6-inch Mark VII gun pointing skyward as the gun is got into action near Hédauville on March 26th. Hédauville is north-west of Albert, on the road to Acheux, and was outside the limit of the enemy's advance, his nearest approach being to Aveluy Wood, on the 47th Division front, during April 5th, the last day of the long battle.

with the two reserve brigades of the XVIII Corps, to regain the Essigny plateau and thus enable the III Corps to re-occupy its former line.

Such action would have been most heartening to the men fighting ; for, all through the retreat, they wondered hourly when the great counter-attack was coming, and were much depressed by the fact that no smashing blow was attempted against the enemy.

The XVIII Corps, to conform with the withdrawal of the 14th Division, had to throw its right flank back behind the St. Quentin Canal, almost at right angles to its former line. During the process it was found necessary to destroy no less than 75 bridges ; and in only one case was there a mishap. Just as the 107th Brigade had blown up a bridge near Seraucourt, the 108th sent a message to say that they wanted to use it. Fortunately another crossing-place was found, and only three platoons were cut off.

A Miraculous Escape

In another case, the Germans were actually on the steel-girder bridge when the time-fuse failed. 2nd Lieutenant Knox, R.E., who was in charge, tore away the useless time-fuse, clambered

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under the bridge, and lit the instantaneous fuse (which is the immediate connection with a charge). Certain death appeared to be his fate if the charge detonated. It did detonate, and the bridge was destroyed ; but, by a miracle, Knox was uninjured. He received the V.C.[1]

Watts, with the XIX Corps, which had now absorbed its cavalry-reserve, maintained his line during the night. He had still two entrenching battalions, and a battalion of tanks in hand, and the 50th Division came into action at 8 a.m. on the 22nd in the Rear Zone. Unfortunately, this division, having been sent forward by rail without its animals, was short of two of the most important elements of its equipment—machine guns and tools.

The situation on the VII Corps front also remained unchanged during the night. Two brigades of the 16th Division which had been roughly handled were replaced by the reserve brigade, and, at the same time, the whole of the 39th Division was brought into action. On the left, the 9th Division was ordered to evacuate the Forward Zone so as to conform with the withdrawal of the V Corps from the Flesquières salient.

The results of a day and night of fighting may be summed up, as regards personnel, by saying that the valiant 173rd Brigade, the 14th Division, and two-thirds of the 16th Division, had practically ceased to exist, and that hardly a unit had escaped from the Forward Zone in a condition fit for further fighting as it stood.

The field artillery had suffered very severe losses, mainly in that zone ; and a number of heavy guns had been captured because they were unable to withdraw in an emergency owing to their lorries having been retained in the back areas in order to swell the transport-pool there.

The Germans, with the assistance of overwhelming numbers and a terrific bombardment, had won their way forward at first with surprising ease ; but, once the fog lifted, they began to suffer heavy casualties.

Tired but not Daunted

The fighting spirit of the troops was everywhere unbroken. They had taken their punishment well, and showed not the slightest sign of panic. The physical strain on them, however, was great. Many of them had been raiding on the night of the 20th/21st, and had been fighting through the whole of the 21st and the following night. The difficulty of obtaining food and drink, and especially the lack of a hot meal, the ceaseless struggle with forces which were beaten off only to reappear at double the strength, the serious losses in officers, and N.C.O.'s—all these were certain, if long continued, to have a deleterious effect on morale and power of cohesion.

General Edmonds, the Official Historian, throws an interesting light on the reasons for, and the incidence of, the German success. It had, he says, been shown in previous engagements that, between well-matched opponents, a superiority of 2½ to 1 was necessary for victory ; and he finds that where, in the struggle under review, that ratio prevailed, the battle raged evenly, while a greater or lesser relative superiority brought the enemy respectively success or discomfiture.

It must be remembered in this connection that we had suffered greatly from the late introduction of conscription. The cream of our youth, including the majority of the natural leaders, had enlisted in the first glorious rush, and, always in the forefront of battle, had fallen as privates in the dreadful succession of early massacres. Next, the bloody battles of the Somme and Passchendaele, in the latter of which nearly all the divisions now under assault had taken part, had robbed us of countless young officers and N.C.O.'s, whose places, by reason of the early sacrifice of leaders, it was almost impossible to fill satisfactorily.

The Germans, for their part, although they, too, had suffered enormously in the great battles, had profited not only from conscription, but also from having been able to bring to France the pick of the troops from the eastern theatre, where they had become habituated to open warfare and had been almost uniformly successful. The odds against which the British soldier had to struggle were therefore higher than a mere count of numbers would indicate.

Third Army Activities

The activities of the Third Army now claim our attention. It will be remembered that the Germans had decided to make no assault on the Flesquières salient, but to pinch it out from north and south, having previously dosed it thoroughly with mustard-gas. On the first day, they limited their operations in this area to bombardment, followed by a number of raids in great force. The V Corps repelled the latter without difficulty, and, at the end of the day, having maintained all its positions, rested content.

Along the whole Army front the bombardment was just as severe as in the south. But the only serious attack against Byng's troops on this day was that made on the IV Corps and the right of the VI Corps, over a front of 7 miles from Boursies to Bullecourt. The IV Corps had the 51st (Highland) and the 6th (Regular) Divisions in the line. These were divisions of the first water, and they had every need of their high qualities on this occasion.

In both cases the defences of the Forward Zone were blasted by a storm of mortar-bombs, and then overrun. The 51st was forced to throw back a flank on the right, and then, having done so, succeeded in repelling all assaults in that quarter. On the left, however, it was driven to the rear line of the Battle Zone. Fortunately that line was well-sited and well-wired ; and so the divisional reserves, supported by accurate shooting on the part of the artillery, managed to maintain it.

On the front of the 6th Division, the enemy reached the Battle Zone within an hour of the first onset. The 18th Brigade, on the right, held on obstinately until nightfall, but, long before that, its situation had become desperate. "At 3 p.m., Lieut.-Colonel A. M. Boyall, commanding the West Yorkshire, reported that without further reinforcements the situation of his battalion was hopeless, that retirement was impossible, but that the battalion would fight it out to the last—a promise which was resolutely fulfilled."[1]

The other two brigades—the 16th and the 71st—also fought finely, with the result that, as darkness fell, the bulk of the division, in spite of the severity of the attack, was still in the front line of the Battle Zone, though both its wings had been thrown back owing to the retirement of the divisions on either flank.

Clever Work by the R.F.A.

Such withdrawals as had been found necessary had been skilfully covered by guns and machine guns. The XXIV Brigade R.F.A., for instance, kept its guns in action until the enemy reached point-blank range, and then withdrew its batteries in succession without losing a gun.

On the front of the VI Corps, an assault of peculiar violence was launched by three divisions against the 59th Division holding the right sector. Early in the month a deserter had stated that the main attack would be made in this area, and that the assailants, after driv-

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 212.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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Photo : F. Robinson, Camberley.

GENERAL SIR HUBERT GOUGH

The ample and much-needed vindication of General Gough and the Fifth Army almost twenty years after their "disgrace" has lately brought the true circumstances of the March Retreat so fully before the public that it is unnecessary to embark upon the subject here. General Gough, who joined the 16th Lancers in 1889, and was severely wounded in the Boer War, first attracted notice as chief among those officers who early in 1914 refused to be employed against possible resistance from Ulster should the Home Rule Act be passed. After serving with the 2nd Cavalry Division, and commanding the 7th Division and, later, the I Corps, during 1914-15, he was given command of the Fifth Army in 1916.

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ing back the 59th, would turn north against the flank of the 34th Division. This was the exact course pursued, and it was fortunate that Major-General Nicholson, commanding the 34th, had taken action to correspond with the threatened danger.

The 59th had arrived in France only in February, and, prior to sailing, had been forced to part with many of its best men as drafts. Consequently, it was not yet well-knit, nor had it received its baptism of fire. Nevertheless, it put in some sterling work, detachments of Staffordshire battalions fighting staunchly in the Forward Zone until overpowered by weight of numbers. In the case of the 2/6th South Staffordshires, "the last message from the battalion headquarters . . . was sent by an artillery officer [Lieut. Crowder; he was later wounded and captured], who telephoned that he was alone, that the enemy was then at the head of the dug-out steps, and that he had burnt all papers and was smashing the instruments."[1]

Once in the Battle Zone, however, the enemy made quick progress, and, by 2 p.m., had captured the villages of Noreuil, Longatte, and Écoust.

As soon as the news of the perilous situation in the Forward Zone reached divisional headquarters, the reserve brigade, many of whose men were playing football, was collected and sent to occupy a line west of the villages. Before they reached it, however, the enemy was already there. As our troops had been expecting to defend, not attack, they were advancing without artillery support, and, consequently, were repulsed with devastating losses. The division was then driven back to the Rear Zone, covered in a truly self-sacrificing manner by both gunners and machine gunners.

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 230.

The Airmen "Do Their Bit"

Here, as elsewhere along the battle-front, our airmen afforded splendid assistance to the much-harassed infantry. According to a German account—"The English got valuable support from their airmen, who came on regardless of consequences. Their squadrons, flying very low, found admirable targets for machine guns and bombs in the thickly-concentrated masses of the . . . divisions."[1]

On the left of the 59th, the 34th Division was, as already stated, carefully organised against an outflanking movement on its right. As soon, there-

[1] Quoted, *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ABANDONING OMIÉCOURT

The circumstances in which Omiécourt was evacuated, after the troops holding it had been surrounded on three sides, have been narrated on page 1239. Here, in a unique photograph, readers are shown the actual scene at the time of the retirement. In the background stores and hutments are resolving into flames, while in the foreground gun teams go forward to pull out their guns. A lorry follows the horses, and in the distance, behind the foremost rider, men can be discerned bustling about a group of limbers.

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Photo : Keystone.

THE EMBODIMENT OF PEACE

At an earlier period of the War—namely, during the first Somme battle of 1916—Omiécourt was captured on Tuesday, September 5th, by French colonial troops, who carried the village at the point of the bayonet in 40 minutes. The remnant of the German garrison endeavoured to escape, but was held up at a level-crossing over the Bapaume—Péronne railway, and obliged to surrender. Our Allies just at this time were carrying all before them.

fore, as the 59th had been driven out of the Forward Zone, the right flank, by a movement previously rehearsed, was thrown back. The enemy's penetration was so deep, however, that he outflanked even this new flank, and poured over the Hog's Back towards Croisilles.

Crowding thickly over the crest of the ridge, he was checked by low-flying aeroplanes and by gun fire. Two batteries of the 160th Brigade, in particular, wrought great execution, firing over open sights. In time they were overrun, but, with rifles and Lewis guns, took to a trench, and held it successfully. Later, as darkness fell, they crept out, manhandled their guns to the waiting teams, and were in action again early next morning.

Meanwhile, the 16th Royal Scots were defending Croisilles in fine style, and, on the left, the Forward Zone remained intact. The danger lay all to the right ; but there, fortunately, the 40th Division was beginning to arrive, and was busily filling all gaps.

Against the 3rd Division, on the left of the corps, no great pressure was brought until late in the day, when the Germans, at a considerable cost to themselves, won a footing in the Forward Zone.

The situation of the Third Army at dusk was, therefore, that a big pocket had been formed by the retreat of the 59th Division—which pocket extended in depth to the rear edge of the Battle Zone, and, on the flanks, roughly to the centres of the 6th and 34th Divisions ; and that a similar but smaller pocket had been formed on the left of the 51st Division.

Unceasing Attacks

As soon as darkness fell, the line was straightened by further retirements. Nevertheless, the pressure continued, and attack and counter-attack followed each other in quick succession throughout the night. Before daylight, however, the 19th, 25th and 40th Divisions had all been brought up from reserve, and there still remained two divisions behind the Army front. There appeared, therefore, to be no cause for alarm or despondency.

As the visibility had been much better in the north than in the south, gunners, machine gunners, and airmen had been able to co-operate much more effectively with the infantry, and had found far better targets opposite the Third Army than opposite the Fifth.

During the night, owing to gas-casualties and the deep penetration effected on either flank, the forward lines in the Flesquières salient were evacuated. The enemy made no attempt at interference, nor did he occupy the vacated trenches until 6 p.m. on the 22nd. The divisions to left and right—the 51st and the 9th, respectively

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ROAD SCENE AT BOUZINCOURT

This picture tells the usual pathetic tale of refugees. Notice, for example, on the right, the old woman with the donkey-cart, and the solitary calf attached behind. It is really little to be wondered at if these bewildered people, beholding their homes destroyed with seeming impartiality by the guns of either side, sometimes forgot who was who, and cursed right heartily the British Tommy sent to save them. This scene was photographed on March 26th, 1918.

—adjusted their inner flanks to the new situation.

On the first day, the Germans had won a success considerable indeed, but hardly commensurate with the magnitude of their efforts. According to their minimum anticipations, they should have reached and overrun the artillery line of their opponents; but only in a few cases had the advance penetrated so deeply. The Kaiser and the Crown Prince were highly elated, but the General Staff were disappointed.

Curiously enough, instead of reinforcing von Below in order as in the original conception, to amplify the success obtained against the 59th Division, Ludendorff sent all reserves of the first day to von Hutier, whose rôle was to form a defensive flank after seizing the line of the Crozat Canal and the Somme. Ludendorff had always held that he must win his battle before he could think seriously of future strategy; and, on the 21st March, it seemed from reports that victory was more likely to be achieved on von Hutier's front than elsewhere.

The Germans Push On

The fog formed again during the night; and under its friendly cover the Germans were able, on the morning of the 22nd, to push forward guns and mortars, and to mass for the assault of the battered British divisions.

Gough's battle-front had now, owing to retirements, been lengthened by four miles, and was manned by infantry which had already lost half its strength. He judged, therefore, that this was not the occasion for a fight to the finish, but one for a carefully-organised retreat. In consequence, at 6.30 a.m. he issued to commanders an order which, while leaving them a good deal of latitude, indicated that a withdrawal to the Somme should be made in the event of serious attack.

Early in the afternoon, more definite instructions followed: the III Corps to stand fast; the XVIII Corps to be back on the Somme that night; the XIX Corps to withdraw to Péronne and man the bridge-head there; the VII Corps to hold the Green Line, which was the name given to the front line of the Rear Zone.

North of the Oise, on the right of the III Corps, the enemy succeeded in forcing the passage of the canal on a front of two miles, although a party of the 8th London managed by stout fighting to maintain its post near the bank until 5 a.m. on the 24th. A little farther north, men from Bedford and Northampton repulsed all attacks, and even captured six machine guns. Beyond them, again, a mixed detachment of 5th Lancers, Cameronians, and Rifle Brigade held the canal until 1 a.m. on the 23rd, when it was forced back; but St. Aubyn, of the 60th, collecting all available cooks, clerks, and batmen in the neighbourhood, charged at their head and recaptured the lost ground, meeting a fine death in the act.

Thus the III Corps and the dismounted

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cavalry had maintained the line of the canal, except on the far right. During the night the first French reinforcements began to arrive; the 125th Division, less its guns and very short of ammunition, being brought up close to the canal by lorry.

Tight Corner for Ulstermen

On the right of the XVIII Corps, the enemy was able, owing to Butler's withdrawal, to strike at the 36th Division in front and flank at the same time. Nevertheless, the Ulstermen decided to fight the battle out, and only an order for a retirement to the Somme saved them from honourable annihilation. On the left of the corps, the 61st Division repulsed a succession of heavy assaults delivered from the Omignon valley, and was confident of being able to stand its ground until nightfall.

It received orders to retire, however; and, unfortunately, the beginning of its withdrawal happened to coincide with a particularly powerful attack launched by the enemy. The orderly conduct of the movement became in consequence a matter of extreme difficulty, and heavy losses were incurred.

During the early afternoon the whole corps reached the Rear Zone. Maxse, however, decided not to remain there. His front had increased by 5,000 yards, his effectives were seriously reduced, and there was no position upon which to resist, except a spit-locked line. So, ordering the brigades of the 20th Division, which were comparatively fresh, to cover the retreat, he withdrew across the Somme.

This action, though justified by Gough's instructions, seemed to the troops unnecessarily precipitate. Once the Rear Zone had been passed, hostile pressure, except against the 61st Division, had to a great extent ceased, and our further retirement gave the impression that a disaster must have occurred elsewhere. The men, in spite of exhaustion and losses, were still wonderfully cheerful. Expecting to see reinforcements arrive and help to hurl Jerry out of the ground he had won, they were happy in the thought of playing a part, though a hard part, in a game of high stakes. It was long before they could believe that they would have to fight out the battle with their own depleted numbers.

By the morning of the 23rd, the corps was established behind the Somme, with the 36th Division on the right, in touch with the III Corps, the 30th in the centre, its right covering Ham, the 20th on the left, and the 61st, much battered, in reserve.

An Unwelcome Withdrawal

During the morning, the XIX Corps, with its strong reinforcements, repulsed all attacks with ease. The troops were therefore in high spirits, and were hotly indignant at receiving the order to retire. A withdrawal by day under pressure is always a difficult and dangerous affair, and severe losses were naturally suffered in the process.

The 8th Queens and part of the 24th Machine Gun Battalion, under Lieut.-Colonel Piers, had a hard fight that day at Le Verguier. They succeeded in holding off two whole divisions for two hours, and then, favoured by the mist,

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ON THE BOUZINCOURT ROAD

The situation of Bouzincourt is 4 km. north-west of Albert, on the road to Acheux and Doullens where this is joined by a byway from Aveluy. The enemy advance fell short of this spot in 1918, but only just—a matter of some 1½ km. Somewhat strangely, the attack (an unsuccessful one) which brought the Germans nearest was carried out as late as May 9th—long after the centre of interest had shifted from the Somme to the Lys.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RETREAT

A little party of machine-gunners of the 20th Division retiring toward Roye on March 25th, 1918. In the morning of that day the division, which was part of the XVIII Corps, had been covering Nesle, north-east of Roye, where it was reinforced by the French 22nd Division. Later, however, the existence of a 3-mile gap between the XVIII and the XIX Corps caused a withdrawal of both divisions to the vicinity of Roye.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

COUNTER-ATTACK

This picture is closely connected with the one above, for it shows troops of the British 20th Division advancing to a counter-attack in the Nesle sector early on March 25th, while French troops of the 22nd Division occupy the foreground. Note the scanty cover hastily thrown up by the Frenchmen with their entrenching tools, and also the British machine-gun post on the extreme right of the French line.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

GERMANS CONSTRUCTING A RAILWAY

An interesting photograph of events " on the other side " : some of the German troops established in the area newly won from the British and French lay a railway-track across part of the devastated area. The situation of the " victors " in this second Somme battle was hardly less discomforting than that of the supposedly vanquished, for the area afforded literally nothing in the way of accommodation or supplies.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

CAPTURED BRITISH SHELLS

German soldiers surveying a captured British shell-dump at Hendecourt during the March offensive. The élan with which the enemy advance began soon wore down into a feeling very different, as utter weariness and not a little hunger took possession of the gallant but over-worked troops ; and prizes of Allied shells were a poor consolation for the absence of ration-carts, jammed on the roads far in the German rear.

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withdrew just in time to avoid being surrounded. Further to the left, the situation was somewhat critical, for the flank had been exposed by the retirement of the 16th Division; but the tension was relieved by a gallant counter-stroke on the part of tanks and cavalry.

After that, the corps fell back without much interference to the Péronne bridge-head. Unfortunately, however, a bomb, dropped on Watts's headquarters, killed some of his staff and thoroughly disorganised the staff-work of the corps; and, largely on that account, two serious mistakes were committed. In the first place, touch was lost with the XVIII Corps; in the second, no notification was sent to Congreve concerning the retirement, so that the VII Corps failed to conform to it.

The right of this corps was already being enveloped, and Watts's retreat naturally accentuated the danger there. Nevertheless, the 21st Division in the centre was still standing firm in the front line of the Battle Zone. Epéhy—the "Floodbreaker," as the Germans called it—held by three Leicestershire battalions and two field companies R.E., was captured only "after heavy blood sacrifices." Of the 9th Division, on the left, only the right brigade had been attacked, and it had held firm. The situation of the corps in the morning was therefore fairly satisfactory.

The enemy continued, however, to exercise relentless pressure, and succeeded in driving three of the divisions back to the Rear Zone. The 9th Division then found itself in a perilous position, with its right flank completely exposed. It had great difficulty in effecting a retirement, but covered itself with glory in the process.

An Epic of Revelon Farm

A company of the 11th Royal Scots fought an epic battle in Revelon Farm. "Bombarded at close range by trench mortars, and bombed by aeroplanes, [it] held out in the farm until 6 p.m., when battalions of three different regiments stormed it."[1]

On the left, two divisions bore down on the 26th Brigade. There, however, we had a stroke of luck. The enemy ran into an anti-tank minefield, and, exploding some of the charges, broke back in panic. A platoon of this brigade belonging to the 7th Seaforths, left in the front line without orders, marched back across country about 10 p.m., attacked several stray parties *en route*, and brought in 18 prisoners.

For the division as a whole, the day was one of bitter fighting and of great doings. By nightfall, it was in the Green Line with the rest of the corps. There was a big gap between it and the V Corps on its left; and another gap existed on its right.

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 297.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE WAR VISITS FINS

The damage wrought by bombardment upon this village does not appear to be so great as a certain atmosphere of finality about the name might justifiably lead one to expect. However, the present photograph was taken in July, 1917, with all the 1918 fighting yet to come. . . . Fins is situated in the fork of two main roads, where the Péronne—Marcoing highway separates from the Péronne—Gouzeaucourt route. It is therefore 14 km. north-east of Péronne, and 19 km. south-west of Cambrai.

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During the night of the 22/23rd, the situation along the front of the Fifth Army was that the III Corps held the Canal, except on its far right; the XVIII Corps lay on the Somme, the XIX Corps covered Péronne, and the VII the Rear Zone north of Péronne.

The troops had fought finely, but were handicapped by somewhat indefinite control. There should have been a clear instruction that ground was to be held firmly during daylight, when the full defensive power of modern weapons can be exploited, and that retirements were to be executed under cover of darkness. It was during retirements ordered under fierce and close pressure that the bulk of the losses were incurred.

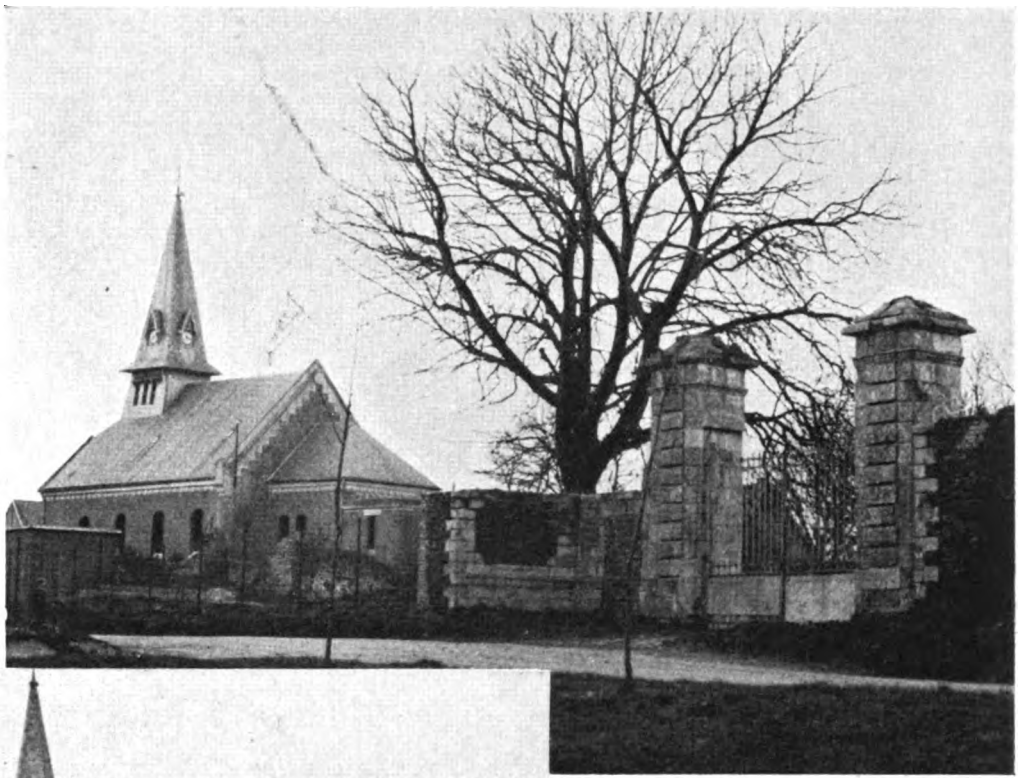

Photo: G. T. Watson.

MODERN FINS

Notice the ruins about the base of the new church. A fairly large British cemetery adorns the south-eastern outskirts of the village; 1,179 United Kingdom, 87 South African, 5 Canadian, 3 New Zealand, 2 Australian, 1 Channel Islands, and 234 German graves are included.

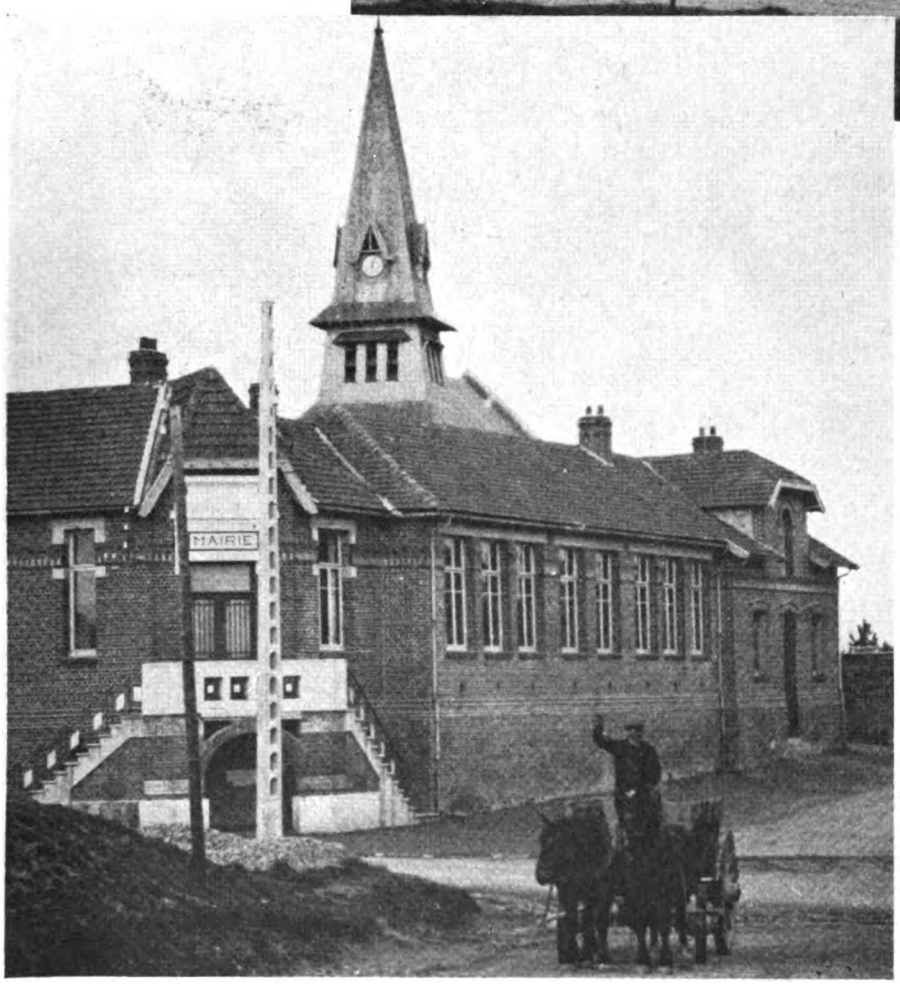

Photo: G. T. Watson.

FINS—CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL

From April, 1917, until March, 1918, Fins lay about 4 km. behind our line. The latter month saw it almost on the "join" between our Fifth and Third Armies, though actually just within the area of the Fifth. It was lost on March 23rd after a stubborn defence by the 6th K.O.S.B. and the staff of the South African Brigade (9th Division, VII Corps), and was regained the following September.

There was a fetish, too, that connection must be maintained in all circumstances. But, where strengths have dwindled and the front has lengthened, the continuous line can present no effective resistance. It is curious that both Haig and Gough, commanding troops untrained in mobile warfare, anticipated a battle in retreat, yet issued no special instructions against that contingency.

Byng's Mistake

On the front of the Third Army, the position of the V Corps was becoming critical. Byng might well have drawn the corps back to the rear edge of the Battle Zone, for the retirements to its right and left had rendered the new salient more pronounced than the original one. Had he taken this course, he would have blunted the edge of the German strategy, economised troops, and been saved from a long period of anxiety for the safety of the corps.

The enemy launched a heavy attack against Hermies, on the northern flank of the salient, but, in face of the heroic

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Specially drawn.

BADGES—EIGHTH SELECTION

Reading from left to right and from the top row downward, the following badges are shown: 1—The Hampshire Regt. 2—The South Staffordshire Regt. 3—The Dorsetshire Regt. 4—The Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regt.). 5—The Welsh Regt. 6—The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders). 7—The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. 8—The Essex Regt. 9—The Sherwood Foresters (Notts. and Derbyshire Regt.). 10—The Loyal North Lancashire Regt. 11—The Northamptonshire Regt. 12—Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire) Regt. 13—The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regt. 14—The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. 15—The King's Shropshire Light Infantry. 16—The Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regt.). 17—The King's Royal Rifle Corps. 18—The Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regt.). 19—The Manchester Regt. 20—The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regt.).

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resistance of the 17th Division, failed with severe losses. For the rest of the day he delivered milder attacks, designed to hold his opponents to their forward position. These latter, weakened by gas-casualties, and continually extending their right to keep touch with the 9th Division, were being stretched to the point of peril.

To the north, the Germans deployed eight divisions against the battered front of the IV Corps. From 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. their assaults were repulsed with devastating losses, and they were beginning to despair of success, when, unexpectedly, the British line began to waver. In some sectors ammunition was failing; in others the weight of numbers was telling; and soon gaps became plainly evident.

At the critical moment, however, the 2nd Tank Battalion, well supported by artillery, made a gallant and sustained counter-attack. It lost 16 out of its 25 tanks, but fulfilled its mission nobly in bringing the enemy definitely to a halt in this area.

VI and XVII Corps

With the VI Corps events shaped themselves in similar fashion, and owing to like causes. The enemy was held with apparently unshakable resolution until 3 p.m., and then retirements began. These exposed the flank of the XVII Corps, and forced the latter to abandon Monchy-le-Preux—a magnificent viewpoint—to the freely-expressed disgust of the men of the 15th Division who were holding it, and had been responsible for its capture in the Arras battle after a titanic struggle. Otherwise, however, the XVII Corps stood its ground, and the VI Corps, though its right was thrown back to the Green Line, was in no serious danger.

In the meantime, grave anxiety had been caused by the penetration of a body of Germans to Fins—a village far behind many of our troops, and 7½ miles from the original front of the salient. The situation seemed so serious that at 11.30 p.m. G.H.Q. issued orders for the Third Army to conform to the retirement of the Fifth and to hold a line from Péronne toward Croisilles.

So ended the first two days of battle. They had been days of defeat and of very heavy loss for the British Army; but the results, except in the south, had by no means fulfilled the expectations of the Germans. The principal blow—that delivered by the *Seventeenth Army* against the IV and VI Corps—had failed to achieve any outstanding success, having everywhere been held, prior to the night retirement, on the rear line of the Battle Zone. Moreover, the Flesquières Salient had not been pinched out. The strategic result of this failure was to turn Ludendorff from his original plan of rolling up the British line northward by means of the *Seventeenth* and *Second Armies*, to one of separating the British from the French by means of von Hutier's *Eighteenth Army*.

In the back areas the retreat was now in full swing. It "presented a curious spectacle. There was almost a holiday atmosphere about it; and the weather was delightful. A large number of people had been thrown out of employment: gunners who had lost their guns, infantry separated from their battalions, surveymen, mortarmen, and other technicians of trench warfare; and many of them might have been seen munching meals by the roadside. There

Photo: Central Press.

TO THE 62ND DIVISION

This obelisk at Havrincourt commemorates the fallen of the 62nd (West Riding) Division during a period of service extending from 1916 to 1918. The names inscribed on the panel devoted to the latter year are: Mory, Vaulx, Havrincourt, Marcoing, Masnières, Solesmes, Orsinval, and Mauberge. The division was despatched by General Horne to reinforce the Third Army soon after the beginning of the March Retreat.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RUE DE L'ÉGLISE, MAILLY-MAILLET

This village, famed for the western façade of its church and the protection afforded thereunto during the War, has figured more than once in our pages, but with the stress laid for the most part on the ecclesiastical "show-piece." Here we illustrate some of the houses in the main street, the War view being dated April 29th, 1918. It may be recalled that on March 26th preceding, the vicinity of this village had witnessed the first whippet tank action of the War. Twelve whippets of the 3rd Tank Battalion were involved.

were no signs of panic. In fact, in many cases defeat was being taken too lightly. . . . There were no visible arrangements in the early stages for collecting and organising stragglers into fresh units."[1]

Recuperation

These arrangements were to mature later, and during the closing days of the retreat many a gap was to be well and truly stopped by bodies of bedraggled soldiers hastily fed, rearmed, reorganised, and thrown back into the fight. For the British Tommy has a wonderful power of recuperation.

By the morning of the 23rd, only one French division—the 125th—had arrived. It attempted to retake the part of the Canal lost the day before, but without success. The Germans then won the whole line of the Canal, and drove the III Corps three miles from it. Two fresh French divisions, coming up later in the day, took over the front, only the remnant of the 14th Division remaining in the line. At the same time, some 700 mounted cavalry and oddments of infantry amounting to 600 men were grouped together under Major-General Harman as "Harman's Detachment," destined as such to do yeoman service for the remainder of the retreat.

Early in the day the Germans effected the capture of Ham and the passage of the Somme at that point. This was a heavy and undeserved blow for Gough, who had every right to expect that the bridge-head there would be stoutly held. It enabled the Germans to thrust a wedge between the 30th and 36th Divisions, and also to threaten the left of the III Corps.

The fighting in that quarter then became hopelessly confused. The French divisions, without guns or transport, and short of ammunition, were forced continually to give ground. Watkin Williams, with his Hussars, improved the situation by a daring charge, in which he captured 107 prisoners. A German regiment, however, broke through, and got behind the Allied line. The 36th Division was then forced to fight facing in three directions, but the stout Ulstermen refused to budge.

The 30th and 20th Divisions maintained their positions on the river, and the 8th Division, brought up from reserve, began to fill the gap between the XVIII and XIX Corps. At the same time, Gough ordered the latter to fall back behind Péronne. That movement left the VII Corps still more in the air, and Congreve had rather a desperate

[1] *Belated Comments*, p. 89.

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

THE RUE DE L'ÉGLISE IN PEACE-TIME

The 1st Battalion New Zealand Rifle Brigade passed through Mailly-Maillet, during the course of the Retreat, shortly after 9 a.m. on March 26th. The battalion had been ordered to hold the high ground east of Englebelmer and Auchonvillers as a screen to cover the deployment of the rest of the New Zealand Division as it arrived from the direction of Amiens. Advance parties of the 1st Rifles encountered German patrols about 11 a.m., drove them back, and held the required line, with considerable fortitude, until the whippet tanks emerged to push back the enemy.

struggle in falling back into line by daylight. Thanks, however, to some fine fighting on the part of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers near Doingt (known to the British soldier as " doing it "), he was able to cover the withdrawal of his right wing across the Somme.

9th Division Strung Out

On his left, the 9th Division had become dangerously extended in a fruitless endeavour to keep touch with the Third Army, whose ill-timed tenacity in the Flesquières Salient had rendered separation inevitable. Major-General Tudor, commanding the division, realised that the destruction of his own division would only render the separation infinitely worse, and concentrated his brigades. He was then able to fight his battle satisfactorily and withdraw.

Curiously enough, at 5 p.m. G.H.Q. had issued an order that the Somme must be held at all costs, and that the Third and Fifth Armies must keep in the closest touch and maintain Péronne as a pivot. At that hour—and it shows how difficult it is for a distant headquarters to control a far-flung battle—the line of the Somme had long been pierced, a blazing canteen proclaimed the evacuation of Péronne, and a wide gap existed between the two Armies.

During the 23rd, the enemy continued his pressure against both flanks of the salient. On the north he captured Hermies and on the south he outflanked the 47th Division and got well behind our line at Bus and Ytres. Fortunately, as often happened during the retreat, he was stopped by a collection of " odd " companies—gunners with rifles, stragglers, etc.—and with this help the 47th Division managed to get clear.

But confusion reigned for a long time, and divisions had to be told to reorganise, secure their own protection, and find their own way back. By about 8.30 a.m. on the 24th, they had shaken themselves into line west of the Germans, and a brigade pushed out to a flank had regained touch with the Fifth Army.

The 63rd and the 2nd Divisions had suffered as much as the 47th. They had fought a long battle, facing three ways, and, like other troops gassed in the salient, were now tired to death. " No words. . . could convey any picture of the confusion of the night of the 23/24th March: troops wandering about to find their brigades and battalions, in an area without landmarks, devastated a year before by the enemy; dumps burning and exploding; gaps in the line; . . . the atmosphere charged with uncertainty,

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and full of the wildest reports and rumours."[1]

Desperate Rear-guard Actions

The IV Corps had been ordered to wait until dusk before withdrawing to the Green Line. The decision, however, lay not with its thinned ranks, but with the enemy. All day it was forced back and fought desperate rear-guard actions, suffering severely, but also taking heavy toll of the enemy. The 58th Brigade was virtually wiped out, but that was the only serious disaster.

The men of the 51st Division saw the fine new theatre which they had just rigged up at Lebucquière pass into German hands on the very day on which their troupe was to have opened it with the presentation of *Turnip Tops*. By daylight, on the 24th, however, the corps was on its new line securely posted. On its left, the situation of the VI Corps was unchanged.

It was on the 23rd that Ludendorff made a definite change of plan. All his armies, spread out in the shape of a fan, were now to take the offensive; the *Seventeenth* to the north-west, the *Second* to the west, and the *Eighteenth*, strengthened by the *Seventh*, nearly to the south-west—the object now being to separate the French from the British, and to give battle to them both. Furthermore, while the *Seventeenth Army* struck north-west, the *Sixth Army*, in the north, and later the *Fourth* also, were to advance and drive the British into the sea. It was an ambitious programme—too ambitious, perhaps, for the available troops.

About 4 p.m. on the 23rd, Pétain visited Haig. He promised to close 12 divisions towards Gough's right, and to do his utmost to support him. More he dared not offer, for he still feared that the Germans would attack in Champagne. He asked, and Haig agreed, that all British troops south of the Somme should come under French command from 11 p.m. on the 24th.

During the night G.H.Q. issued the necessary orders to put this policy into effect. The VII Corps, less troops south of the Somme, was transferred to Third Army, while at the same time the Fifth Army passed from Haig's control to that of Fayolle, under whose general direction Gough was still to command.

On the 24th, the gains of the enemy were considerable. On the right, he drove back the French divisions, the III Corps, and the right of the XVIII Corps, about 5 miles.

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, i, p. 381.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CONCENTRATION AT HÉNENCOURT

The 17th Division concentrating at Hénencourt as V Corps reserve after the evacuation of Hermies, March 26th, 1918. Hermies had been evacuated on the 24th, after an attack described by the *Official History* as "the most serious fighting of the day" (i.e. on the V Corps front) had failed completely against it on the 23rd. Its garrison had been the 7th Lincolnshires of the 17th Division. Notice the fine gateway in the background of this photograph.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NACH AMIENS

A good "action" photograph of German infantry advancing on a village. Such a scene as this took place time and again during the March Retreat, although it would be more strictly correct to say that the landscape was seldom so fortunate as this one in the matter of upstanding trees. In their rapid, at times almost headlong, pursuit of the British Third and Fifth Armies deep into the most difficult country, the German foot-soldiers on the Somme in 1918 performed perhaps their best feat of the War—a feat surpassed only by the astonishing resistance which met and eventually overcame them. At one point they penetrated to within 8 miles of their goal—Amiens.

During the progress of the enemy offensive on this date the village of Villeselve witnessed two stirring episodes. The 2nd Royal Irish Rifles and the 12th King's, seeing that the ground over which their line of retreat lay was destitute of cover, decided to fight to the last where they stood. They were eventually overwhelmed; but the German history records that they held up six hostile battalions for five hours—a great gain to their side.

The other incident was a charge by a party, 150 strong, of the 6th Cavalry Brigade. The troopers rode straight through the German line, and then, turning right-handed, swept along it. They lost half their strength, but imposed a definite check on the hostile advance at a critical moment, and restored the confidence of our infantry.

Along the rest of the front of the XVIII Corps, the 30th and 20th Divisions defended the river stoutly until late in the day. Then, as their flanks were exposed and the enemy was getting behind them, they retreated in succession to the Canal du Nord, on whose western bank the Allied troops north of the Oise were now assembling. Before retiring, the 11th Rifle Brigade and the 11th and 12th K.R.R.C. shook the enemy with some rousing counter-attacks. The gallant stand and skilful withdrawal of a small mixed detachment under Major Massie also helped the 20th Division in the difficult task of breaking away.

The XIX Corps, greatly assisted by the fact that the Germans had captured a store of whisky, held the river-line to Péronne without difficulty, except near Pargny, where the enemy succeeded in effecting a passage. To regain the lost ground, Gough arranged with the French to carry out a combined counter-attack on the 25th.

North of the Somme, the right of the VII Corps was driven back some miles, but then, fortunately, the leading battalions of the 35th Division, after a march of 17 miles, came into action and stayed the rush. Farther north, two brigades of the 9th Division executed an orderly retirement, the infantry "fighting from ridge to ridge in perfect co-operation with our gunners. . . . It might have been a divisional field day"[1] except that part of the 26th Brigade was driven northward, and had to fall back on Albert.

South Africans' Heroism

In the meantime, however, the South African Brigade had suffered a disaster. It had received an order to hold its position at all costs, and it did so. It fought staunchly and skilfully, holding up the hostile advance for seven hours, and was overwhelmed only when ammunition ran out and hardly an unwounded man remained. The German records bear unanimous and generous testimony to the heroism of the brigade, and South Africa may well be proud of the courage and endurance of her sons in this dire extremity.

[1] Croft, *Three years with the 9th Division*, p. 188.

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Photo: *Imperial War Museum.*

ARTILLERY NEAR ROYE

British artillery halted and "parked" near Roye shortly before the loss of the town on March 26th, 1918. On the 25th the artillery of the British 61st Division had been supporting the infantry of the French 22nd Division, which held the line in front of Roye. Orders were issued, however, that the gunners should cover the retirement of five brigades of our 20th and 61st Divisions, which were fighting alongside the French. Later, at night, the 61st and 20th divisional artillery was ordered to retire on Montdidier. Roye was lost soon after 8 a.m. on the 26th, the French infantry, left with a gap on either side of it, drifting slowly rearward after the British guns.

On the 24th, the V Corps was continually on the verge of disaster. It lost connection with the VII Corps, and into the gap the enemy pressed a strong wedge, from which detachments operated in rear of the British, and gravely threatened their retreat. Fanshawe did, however, eventually manage to establish a satisfactory line through Martinpuich, which freed him at last from the danger of being "pinched out." On the other hand, by the time he had arrived on it there were not a great many of his men left to pinch.

The IV Corps, also, had a harrowing, though less difficult, experience. It was forced to abandon Bapaume, and took up a line west of that town. The VI Corps, after repulsing very violent attacks, drew back its right to conform. On the front of the XVII Corps there was no fighting.

Byng's situation that night was therefore that his left was still in its original position, whereas his right had fallen back 17 miles. He was now to take over the VII Corps and extend his line to the Somme.

During the period 21st—24th March, the British armies had traversed the area devastated by the Germans in their retirement to the Hindenburg Line in 1917, and were now falling back across the old Somme battlefields, losing in a few days what had taken months of fierce struggle to win. Here is a British view of the matter:

"The desolation of the Somme country was in keeping with our feelings. Feet were sore with marching over rough country; stomachs were yearning for nourishment; mouths parched; bodies tired with a heavy and numbing fatigue."[1]

"On and On Like Hell"

And here is a German view: "The devastation is immeasurable. There is hardly a cellar left of the villages which we destroyed . . . We are going like hell, on and on, day and night . . . Our baggage is somewhere in the rear, and nobody expects to see it again. We are glad if ration-carts and field-kitchens can get to us at night. Then men and horses feed for 24 hours at one sitting."[1]

The elation of the German troops, tremendous at first, was being slowly killed by losses and exhaustion. Behind the lines, however, hope still flamed high. There were many who, before the great assault, had urged peace by understanding. That mood had passed. Prince Max of Baden records how one of these advocates rushed into his room, shouting—"What an experience . . . World dominion!"[2]

At 11 p.m., Pétain arrived at Dury and informed the British Commander-in-Chief that his intention was to withdraw the French armies to cover Paris. As such action would involve the complete separation of the Allied armies, Haig at once wired to ask that Lord Milner and the C.I.G.S. should come to G.H.Q., and at the same time urged that Foch should be given control of the operations in France.

On the 25th, the retreat continued.

1 Maude, *History of the 47th Division*, p. 169.

1 Rudolf Binding, *A Fatalist at War*, p. 206.

2 *Memoirs of Prince Max of Baden*, p. 293.

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South of the Somme, the French divisions, which were supposed to be relieving and protecting the British, fell back on the slightest pressure, and, uncovering the flanks of their allies, forced the latter to retire likewise. There was also a marked tendency on the part of the French to pivot on their right and retire to the south-west, carrying the British divisions with them.

Maxse, though serving under the French, decided that this must cease, otherwise he would be swept away from the XIX Corps. He therefore collected his divisions about Roye, and moved them thence to the north-west and west, the French offering no objection. There his infantry, now only 4,000 strong, were available to fill, if required, any gap that might occur between the French and the XIX Corps. His guns, however, still remained with the French.

French Fail to Co-operate

On the front of the XIX Corps, the 8th and 24th Divisions moved forward to the counter-attack as arranged. Unfortunately, the French commander had, without informing Watts, cancelled his orders for co-operation, and the French divisions were therefore falling back as the British were advancing, leaving the latter a very difficult battle to fight.

Farther north, the 66th and 39th divisions and part of the 50th held the line of the river until noon, when the Germans succeeded in forcing passages at several points. Watts then ordered a retirement, to take place at dusk, towards an entrenched line running north and south some 5 miles back. The 2nd Middlesex, guarding the bridge at Brie, did not receive the order, and so, with instructions to hold on at all costs, fought until three-quarters of the battalion had been killed or wounded. Then the remainder, covered by a small rear-guard under Lieut.-Col. Page, made good its escape through a disused communication-trench. Before dawn the corps was established in its new position.

On the VII Corps front north of the Somme, the 35th Division, with the support of eight battalions of "odd-ments" under Lieut.-Col. Hunt, repelled the attacks of five German divisions. Any ground lost was at once retaken, the 12th H.L.I. and the 19th Durham L.I. especially distinguishing themselves in counter-attacks.

Further north again, the battered remnants of the V and IV Corps, still fighting hard, fell slowly back. The latter had a specially hard day, for von Below, determined to make a breach in the line, thrust six divisions as a battering ram against the corps' right. However, three fresh divisions came up—the 12th, 42nd, and 62nd—and with their help the two weary corps retired across the Ancre. Aircraft, summoned from every part of the front to meet the emergency, also rendered invaluable aid.

On the 26th, the French right, in spite of the gallant assistance lent by our cavalry brigades (which, being now mounted, were able to gallop from

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PART OF THE GERMAN "BAG"

Dusty and weary, a mass of British prisoners, captured during the Retreat, await orders in a meadow bordering on Cambrai. By the end of March 22nd, the second day of the offensive, the Germans claimed 16,000 prisoners and 200 guns. On the 23rd they claimed respectively 25,000 and 400. On the 25th, 45,000 and 600. On the 28th, 70,000 and 1,100, in addition to 100 tanks. Finally, on April 4th—the day on which German G.H.Q. officially abandoned all idea of taking Amiens—the claim stood at 90,000 prisoners and 1,300 guns.

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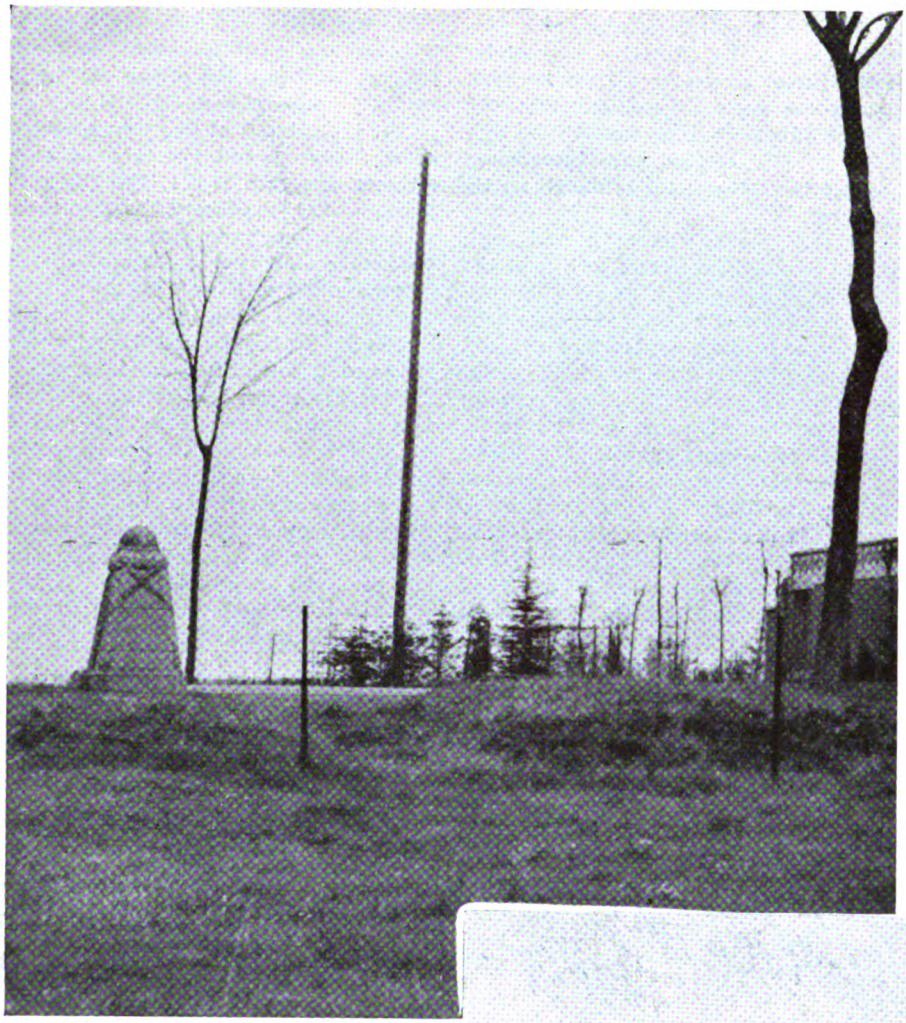

Photo: G. T. Watson

ICI FUT ARRÊTÉ L'ENVAHISSEUR!
Such is the inscription on more than 280 pink granite stones, as on the one shown here, erected by the French Government to mark the furthest limits of German progress. A steel-helmet, in granite, surmounts each pillar. The example photographed stands near the road a mile east of Villers-Bretonneux.

danger-point to danger-point), was driven back about 5 miles, while at the same time the left wing lost Roye.

Tale of 100 Cornishmen

Beyond that town there was a three-mile gap, into which Maxse pushed the remnants of his 4 divisions. It was during this operation that a magnificent stand was made by 100 men of the 7th Duke of Cornwall's L.I., under Captain Combe, by which the detachment held up an otherwise victorious German force for 4½ hours, and then, when nearly surrounded, cut its way out.

Maxse's artillery, still covering the French at, and south of, Roye, found our allies lacking in their usual resolution. All that day the gunners could hear mutterings of "*La Guerre est finie.*" The French artillery, lined-up in long rows, presumably to deceive hostile aviators, could not fire, for it had no ammunition. The French cavalry and infantry retired repeatedly through our guns, leaving them exposed and unprotected, and making our gunners believe for the first time that the War might be lost.

To the north, Watts found himself in a precarious position. There was a gap on his right, and beyond his left the VII Corps, by a wholly unexpected retirement, had dangerously exposed that flank. Severely pressed by the enemy, he withdrew his line a further 5 miles, destroying the Somme bridges as he went. In this operation a battalion of the East Surreys, not receiving the order to retire, fought on till its ammunition was exhausted and it had only 57 unwounded men left.

During the night, Gough began improving the old defence line 15 miles east of Amiens. He manned it with some 3,000 troops, mainly engineers, among whom were 500 Americans—the only part of Pershing's army to take a share in the battle. He placed Major-General Carey in command.

Early on the 26th, Byng issued an order which, while still demanding a

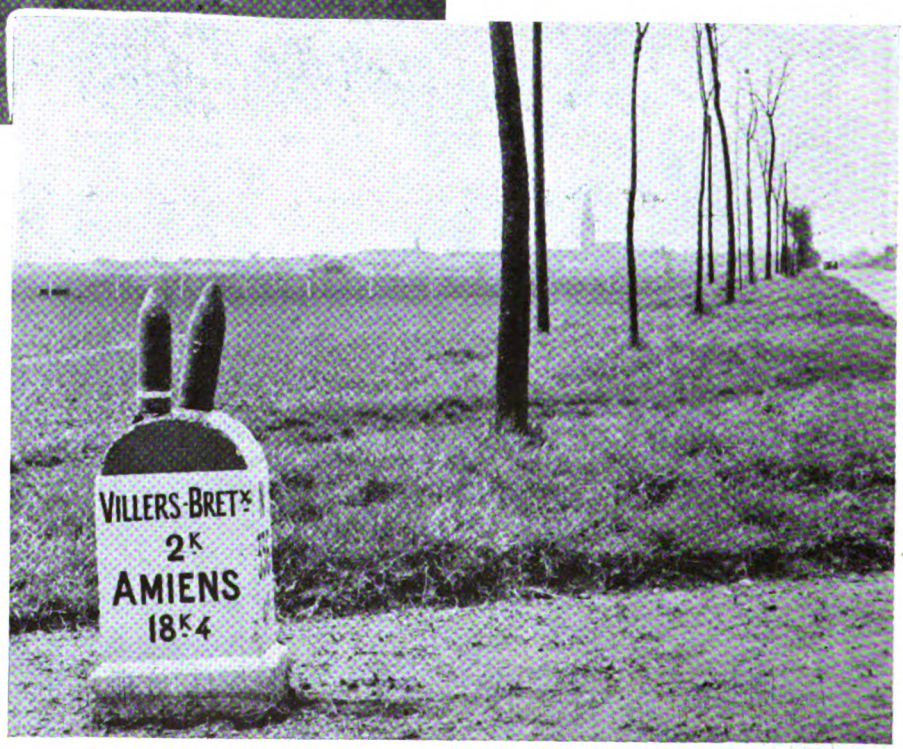

Photo: G. T. Watson.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER
Proof indeed that, nearly twenty years after the Armistice, shells are still being turned up by the plough in every corner of the former Somme battlefields. This spot is particularly interesting as being specifically mentioned by General Gough in the opening pages of *The March Retreat*. It formed part of the elaborate Amiens defence-system constructed in 1916, and it was on this line that, late in March, 1918, part of "Carey's Force"—the last reserve of the Fifth Army—took up its stand.

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stout resistance, indicated a retirement in case of necessity towards the north-west, pivoting on Arras. With Pétain falling back to the south-west and Byng to the north-west, it looked as if a gap might soon form, large enough for the whole German Army.

Conflicting Orders

On receipt of this order, Congreve directed his subordinate commanders to fight as long as possible on the line Bray—Albert, and then, if forced to do so, to swing back the right flank behind the Ancre. At the same time, he told Franks by telephone that the retirement over the river must begin in the afternoon. Franks, who felt that he could hold on much longer, protested in vain, and then, at 2.30 p.m., began his withdrawal.

At 3 p.m., however, Congreve was warned by Byng—the first result of the Doullens Conference, of which more anon—that on no account was there to be a voluntary retirement. He at once ordered Franks to come to a halt. Franks did what he could but, with the troops well under way, found it impossible to obey. He managed, however, to maintain his right on the Somme, though 6 miles west of his former position.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

NOT A WAR-TIME PHOTOGRAPH
Incredible as it may seem, this is a contemporary photograph. It shows a château at Villers-Bretonneux—exactly the same to-day as it was in 1918. The building stands in a street on the west side of the little town, and makes a grim spectacle. The old man in the picture's foreground remembered all the War events here.

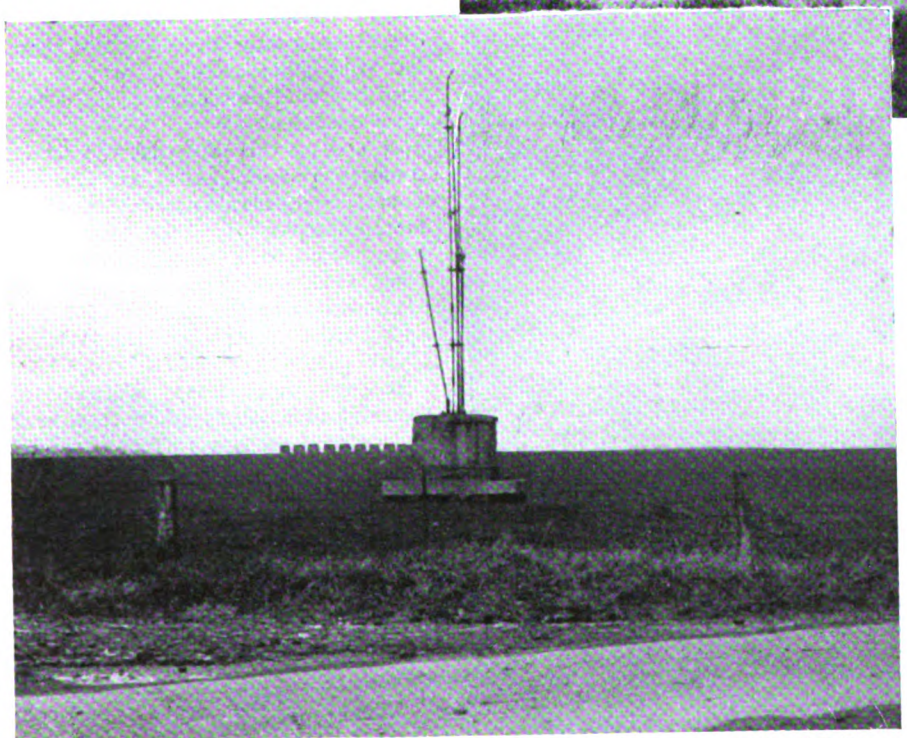

Photo: G. T. Watson.

CRUCIFIX CORNER
Once again a modern spectacle which has remained absolutely unaltered since 1918: the damaged crucifix at Crucifix Corner has never been repaired, and probably never will be. Close at hand is Crucifix Corner Cemetery (British), where 293 Australian, 287 United Kingdom, 241 French, 76 Canadian, and 10 German dead lie buried. Cemetery and crucifix are one mile south of the railway station, on the road from Villers-Bretonneux to Démuin.

The V Corps abandoned Albert, and drew up to the west of it. The Germans, encouraged by whisky found in the town, poured out to the attack, and got heavily punished by machine guns. To the north, the 7th Suffolks, 7th Norfolks, and 9th Essex offered an astonishing and successful resistance to the thrust of two hostile divisions. On the left of the corps was a gap of 4½ miles, beyond which were the two fresh divisions of the IV Corps—the 62nd and 42nd.

The situation was fraught with peril. The Germans, pouring through the gap, threatened to take both corps in rear. The broken divisions, however, which had been withdrawn after their terrific hammering, showed that, though short of everything else, they had plenty of courage. They moved forward, oc-

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cupied some old trenches, and brought the advance to a standstill. At the same time, Coleridge's brigade of the Naval Division countered strongly and captured 13 machine guns.

The end of the danger was now in sight. Stout fighting, endurance under terrible exhaustion, and courage in defeat, had not been wasted. The line had held; and reinforcements drawn from the north were coming to the rescue. New Zealanders, after marching hard and far, assaulted and drove back the assailants, and, joining up on the right with the 4th Australian Division, which had also fought its way forward, re-established a continuous line.

A gap on the front of the VI Corps afforded the occasion for the 15/17th West Yorkshires to distinguish themselves by a skilful and daring counter-attack, and for Sergeant Mountain of that battalion to win the V.C. The gap was closed, and the line maintained.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AMONG THE WORCESTERS

His Majesty King George V photographed while in conversation with Captain Jordan, of the 10th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment (commanded by Colonel Sole), at Doullens railway station on March 29th, 1918. This battalion, which had hitherto fought all through the Retreat, had lost 18 officers and 500 men—a casualty-list formidable indeed, but unfortunately far from unique.

Few Aircraft for Fifth Army

As usual, the greater part of the available aircraft—34 squadrons out of a total of 58—was employed to protect the Third Army, 10 squadrons only supporting the Fifth Army. The airmen found first-rate targets in enemy reserves and transport toiling with difficulty across the trenched, wired, and shell-torn Somme battlefields.

Thus, at the end of the day, the British front was holding as far as the right of the XVIII Corps. Secure north of the Somme, it was still shaky to the south of that river, while further south still, there was considerable anxiety regarding the fighting capacity of the French divisions and the direction of their retreat.

On the other hand, it was apparent for the first time that the morale of the Germans was failing. And no wonder. They had suffered stupendous losses, had outrun most of their guns, and had been struggling, exhausted and hungry, through the wilderness of the Somme. They felt the promised victory, for all their early success, to be as far off as ever. They were staggering stolidly on, but the glamour of adventure had vanished, and the flames of enthusiasm were quenched.

It was on this day that the famous conference took place at Doullens. There, by general agreement of the representatives of Great Britain and France, and with the willing assent of Haig, Foch was charged with the task of co-ordinating the actions of French and British armies on the Western Front.

It was full time. Pétain told Clemenceau at the conference that he had ordered the French Army to retire southward, and that he expected the total defeat of the British Army, followed by that of the French. Such a defeatist attitude on the part of one of the principal actors might well have cost the Allies the victory.

Foch was of finer temper. "If there is a gap," he said in substance, "it should be closed, not widened. The French and British armies must combine to cover Amiens. The troops in the line must hold their ground at all costs. Under their protection, reinforcements will detrain. They will be employed, firstly to consolidate the Fifth Army, and then as an army of manœuvre."

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CHAOS IN NESLE

A brief account of the loss of Nesle on March 25th, 1918, will be found below the photograph of the "Leicester Lounge" on page 1272. The present illustration shows the state in which the British had found the town on taking possession of it in March, 1917, at the time of the withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. Such havoc was invariably described in the Press at the time as "wanton," but it must be remembered that it is part of military policy, when retiring, to leave the abandoned area as valueless as possible for the enemy.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ROAD IN MODERN NESLE

As with most villages, the landmark which at once catches the eye is the church. This is not the building seen in the war-time view, whose destruction was an inevitable accompaniment to the happenings of 1918; but it is interesting to note how the enemy in 1917 apparently left the old church intact—a circumstance contrary both to his usual practice and to the dictates of military prudence.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NESLE: THE *PLACE*

British and French cavalry detachments entered Nesle, on the heels of the Germans, late at night on March 18th, 1917. The Germans re-entered it on the afternoon of March 25th a year later. Finally, the French took possession "for keeps" of what was left of the town on August 28th, 1918. Above we see Nesle during the term of British occupation.

MARKET DAY

The most conspicuous touch of modernity in the square of remade Nesle is the cinema, visible above the canvas roofs of the market-stalls; but nearly all the town has been rebuilt, and these two views show hardly a house in common. The graceful building on the left of the "Now" picture is a great improvement on the shabby old Mairie of War days.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

END OF AN HISTORIC BUILDING

This illustration shows the ruins of the historic 17th-century church of the little village of Pertain, as photographed on September 20th, 1917. Pertain lies 15 km. south-south-west of Péronne, on the road from Omiécourt to Marchain. Country lanes communicate with Marchelepot, Licourt, and Dreslincourt.

SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED

Although the style is similar, there has been no attempt at Pertain to reproduce the ancient church exactly. In March, 1918, the thinly-held line of the 8th Division fell back on Pertain about 8 a.m. on the 25th; and the high ground east of the village was then gallantly held for some three hours.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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French Lose Montdidier

On the 27th, the French stood firm in the south, but on our immediate right they fell back 9 miles and lost Montdidier. The XVIII Corps, whose shrunken ranks fought yet another exhausting battle that day, retired some 4 miles, their disgust at retreat being mitigated by the spectacle of a fine counter-attack by the 12th Kings.

The real danger this day lay to the north, owing to the possibility—caused by the retreat of the VII Corps—that the enemy would cross the Somme behind the XIX Corps and cut its communications. Such troops as could be found in Amiens were pushed up to defend the Somme bridges; but, nevertheless, the Germans succeeded in forcing a passage, and in establishing themselves south of the river far behind the British line. The 39th Division was forced southward, and at nightfall was facing east, north and west.

Three battalions of the 16th Division had an astonishing adventure. Realising that they were isolated, they fought all day facing east. Then, at dusk, they fell back along the river, destroyed a piquet holding a bridge, crossed to the north bank, marched some miles west in enemy country, destroyed another bridge-piquet, crossed again to the south, and rejoined their division.

On the right and centre of the corps, some exceptionally fine counter-attacks showed that the spirit of the troops was still high. The remnants of three weary battalions recaptured Proyart, taking many prisoners; and near Harbonnières, where the enemy had broken through, reserves hastily collected from three divisions met and threw back the victorious Germans, the 8th Division especially distinguishing itself.

The peril could have been obviated had the XIX Corps retired earlier. But Gough had the order from Foch that he was not to give ground on any account, and it was long before he could get that order rescinded. One of the most delicate problems in the art of war lies in the choice of the moment to retire during a "battle in retreat"; for such a choice cannot be made subject to any rigid rule.

The Crisis Over

On the 28th, the XVIII Corps was relieved, and the 61st and 18th Divisions were brought over to help the XIX Corps. The latter had a day of desperate fighting, illumined by the fine leadership of Jackson, Riddell, Feetham, and Malcolm. The line, gallantly supported by cavalry galloping up to stop gaps, fell back into the defences prepared by Carey's force. The crisis was then over, and Amiens saved.

It was on this day that the long-threatened onslaught was made on Arras. Twenty German divisions were deployed against eight British on either side of the Scarpe. Assaulting well-entrenched positions, and assisted neither by fog nor by surprise, they were repulsed with merciless slaughter. They had led off with a terrific bombardment. "If ever the lid was taken off hell," says the historian of the K.O.S.B.,[1] "it must have been on March 28th, 1918."

[1] Quoted in *The Fifteenth (Scottish) Division*, p. 207.

Part of the Forward Zone, crushed almost out of existence, was lost, but much of the ground was regained by nightfall. Our losses were severe. The 15th Division, fighting resolutely as usual, suffered 2,000 casualties, bringing its total for the 8 days to over 5,000. Among those who displayed marked heroism, the 4th London and the Queen's Westminsters took high place.

Ludendorff at once recognised the failure of the northern attack, and, stopping it, concentrated all his energies on the thrust toward Amiens. But the broken and crowded roads, subjected to continual air-attack, could no longer feed the advance. Fresh hope did, indeed, well up for the Germans when they captured Moreuil Wood close to the Paris—Amiens railway. But here General Seely, with his gallant Canadian troopers, saved the situation.

Physically, morally, and administratively, the Germans were now exhausted; and all round the vast salient which they had created by their stupendous and courageous efforts, fresh Allied divisions were building an unshakable wall. They fought on bravely, indeed, but also wearily. They even captured Villers-Bretonneux—a town dominating Amiens. But their bolt was shot. By a fine feat of arms the Australians retook Villers-Bretonneux, and by that action brought the long-drawn-out battle to a close.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WOUNDED BUT CHEERFUL

British troops at the 43rd Casualty Clearing Station, Frévent, on April 8th, 1918. On April 14th it was reported that British infantry losses on the Western Front since March 21st amounted to 7,408 officers and 188,000 other ranks, the total of all arms up to the night of the 14th being 210,000.

The Enemy "Digs In"

The Germans then settled down, in their freshly-won and most uncomfortable territory, to a spell of trench warfare. They had caused the liveliest anxiety in the Allied camp. They had appeared at moments to be within an ace of an overwhelming victory. But although they had made great captures of men and material, the strategic results were adverse rather than favourable to them. The men of the two British armies, struggling heroically but at times almost hopelessly against desperate odds, were in due course to find their courage and endurance rewarded. They had set in train a series of events destined to lead to ultimate victory.

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CHAPTER LXXVII

MEMORIES XVI.—BULLETS AND BILLETS

Life on the Western Front was not all fighting; the tempo *in the front-line trenches was too fast for that. Without spells of rest the nerves of all but the toughest would have cracked. Every man who served in France and Flanders has pleasant recollections of some quite ordinary small town or village in which he was accustomed to spend his days of rest. Many and varied were the diversions practised behind the lines; rich and rare were the stories concocted in billet and estaminet. Here one who served throughout the Great War on the Western Front recalls some of the lighter episodes that helped men to forget, if only for a brief spell, the stern doings "up the line."*

In the early days of 1914, a straggler, unshaven and begrimed beyond words, stood lighting his pipe in a railway siding as a trainload of reinforcements drew up. "Are we downhearted?" roared the troops from the windows, following the question with their own crashing reply of "NO!" The "old sweat" spat, jerked his thumb to the east, and shouted—"But you b—— soon will be!" Which tale recalls not only songs, but other things which kept the spirits up.

No High-flown Sentiments Here

Some refrains were sung with gladness or just for the sake of singing something. *Pack up your Troubles in your Old Kit-bag* went well everywhere. The tune possessed a comfortable lilt, there was no stirring patriotism about it, and especially it lacked that "Hurrah for little Belgium!" spirit with which the troops so strongly disagreed. Every unit possessed its variations on the song *We are Fred Karno's Army* (to the melody of *The Church's One Foundation*), with its last three lines:

> *"Hoch! Hoch! Mein Gott!*
> What a very fine lot
> Are the lads of the L.R.B."

—or whatever was the unit.

The piece in the middle of the verse can be supplied *ad lib.* It was always profane, and usually unprintable.

We liked the sentimental ditties best, and would organise concerts in great barns rendered pleasantly hazy by clouds of tobacco smoke—ourselves warm by contact with humanity, and perhaps a little addled after a visit to some estaminet. Then we would sing: *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, incidentally unaware that munition-workers were on strike for higher wages while men were being blown to pieces for a bob or two a day. Some lads would hold hands, their lower lips quivering, as they sang *Roses are Blooming in Picardy* and like sentimental favourites.

In such an atmosphere the dark clouds would be turned inside out, though the boys might be destined never to return home. Men always sang the National Anthem with gusto, standing rigidly to attention. The rumour that the King was in France among his troops was like the passing of a magic wand over the spirits of his warriors. When we heard that he had sustained a severe fall from his horse, dread for his safety clutched the heart. I remember with what extraordinary pleasure I saw, quite by chance, his slight figure inspecting the craters beside Fricourt, after the Somme "Big Push."

The then Prince of Wales seemed ubiquitous, turning up on all kinds of astonishing occasions, stumbling up the trenches for a peep, "blowing in" to a dug-out for a drink, pacing about in most unpleasant places, tin hat askew and smoking a "gasper," making himself familiar with the lie of the land, with the men, and not least with our absurd vocabulary.

Delicate Euphemisms

As to language, a substantial dictionary would be required to contain all the words which denoted new missiles or new features in the daily round of trivialities. One word, unprintable, was almost the sole adjective applied to everything and everybody. There were certain subtle euphemisms, too. The delicate operation of "scrounging" was termed "winning" or "getting."

A competent scrounger was counted a blessing to his battalion or battery, deserving of much gratitude and praise. Government stores of all kinds were there to be "won." During the height of the First Battle of the Somme, I learned with much joy that the new mount with which my groom had presented me after the High Wood battle had been "won" from an Indian cavalry officer while two squadrons were waiting with picketed horses amid the tumult of Caterpillar Valley.

After many visits to Armentières I think I know who may have been the heroine of the ribald song incorporating the name of this city. In 1914, if I am right, she kept a vegetable and fruit store, with bright green shutters, in the *Place*. The fruits and greens on show were but a lure, so rumour had it, to other fruits behind the screen. The song is a kind of immortal epitaph in memory of all those who chose to be as indiscreet as *mademoiselle*.

There were many other billeting-places behind the lines, each with its own peculiar charms. I can name only some, at random: Amiens, with its majestic cathedral; Corbie; St. Pol; Béthune, the haunt of the First Hundred Thousand before Loos, 1915; Bailleul, which I was the last to leave when the Germans stormed the city in April, 1918; Abbeville, grim with its hospitals; Arras; Albert, with the strange phenomenon of its hanging Virgin.

Nearly everyone who fought on the Somme knew Corbie. It was not much of a town, and its walls mostly had been splashed high with mud from the endless streams of lorries thundering over the *pavé* of its streets. The dust of the Somme battles lay thick wherever the winter rains failed to wash the masonry. The town, with its neat streets, clung around the superb Gothic cathedral; and beneath the shadow of the Cathedral stood the Café Alexandre, blue-shuttered, and on the opposite side of the street the Café de la Poste, both happy meeting-places. Hugging the main road, which turned sharply before the cathedral, was the *Place*, faced by the pretentious little *Mairie*.

Music at Eventide

In the evening the elders would sit and gossip, while children gambolled at their grandparents' feet. Often enough the youngsters were waved aside, or some elderly man would hobble quickly to snatch a child from the feet of military drummers. Each evening "Retreat" was bravely played upon the *Place* by

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE LOCAL "RITZ"

Men of the 46th Labour Battalion photographed outside the patched-up and re-christened "Leicester Lounge," Nesle, 1917. This town, situated 11 km. west of Ham and the same distance north-east of Roye, was all but reached by the retreating XVIII Corps on March 24th, 1918. On the 25th the French 22nd Division was moved in front of the town to reinforce the British 20th and 30th Divisions; but the French *Official History* says briefly that "toward 4 p.m. the 22nd Division lost Nesle and began to retreat."

such battalions as might be resting in Corbie. I used to marvel at men, whom I had so recently seen bearing stretchers on the battlefield, now proudly rolling a tattoo on great tenor and side-drums, the latter swinging in measure with the drummers' peculiar gait.

Drummers with heads thrown back, eyes bright, drumsticks whirling a rhythmic pattern in the air, the crash of the big drum, the swelling roll of side-drums, the gay piping of the fifes—and ahead, with martial pride and infinite, glorious swagger, the drum major. Swinging kilt and sporran are, too, superb ornamental assets, and were always a good help to popular esteem. Immense crowds of soldiery from the streets, shops, and estaminets of Corbie would gather in the *Place* at sundown with full-throated applause.

There were three rendezvous in Béthune which were equally patronised: the *Pâtisserie*, the Globe, and the Red Lamp. Of these, the first two were variously favoured, but the entertainment was wholly virtuous. In the earlier days, late on Sunday morning, following the hour of Mass, the *Pâtisserie* was filled with the quality of Béthune, sipping coffee and sampling delicacies.

In the back parlour were tables, much sought after. No maidens of Béthune were ever so beautiful as those of the *Pâtisserie* and no tea, coffee, or chocolate could be brewed with so rare a flavour as that prepared by their hands. At Passchendaele, in 1917, I used to think about those damsels as I sipped tea stewed in chlorinated water. It seemed to taste better.

The Globe possessed a speciality: champagne—"bubbly" of the best, and miraculously cheap. This sparkling nectar ran almost like water, discharged from some fathomless cellar. At the Globe were manufactured far more stories than ever came from the Stock Exchange; birth was given here to much of the classic ribaldry attached to the names of famous generals. "Have you heard the latest about So-and-so?"

The Globe—and the Red Lamp

The Globe, a bottle of bubbly—and at once the strafes of a commanding officer or the enemy had burst with the bubbles, and all the weariness and disappointment of trench warfare and raids were submerged in the glitter of dancing eyes and scintillating wine.

The Globe and the *Pâtisserie* were unofficial. Their success depended upon the private enterprise of both proprietor and customers. Not so Béthune's outstand-

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ing attraction—the Red Lamp. Such patronage as this establishment secured—and it was considerable—was largely that of curiosity. The invitation of the Red Lamp was to curiosity in hours of boredom. The waiting queues proved that much.

Relays of the curious passed through the door; but I doubt if more than a few returned to revisit the scene of so much labour. Men were very faithful to a wife or a sweetheart at home, and they were incredibly loyal to one another. No paradox in that, no camouflage. The simple naked truth. Men cannot live even closer to each other than man and wife, week in, week out, by day and by night, without the closest confidence. Nor will they break faith.

If Smith visited the Red Lamp, Robinson knew it and forgot. If Jones made love to the wench in the estaminet at the cross-roads, Smith may have remembered the map reference, but conveniently turned a blind eye upon his chum's flirtations. Smith, Jones, and Robinson came from the same village. And Smith and Robinson were "mucking-in" pals sharing the same blanket. Robinson forgave Smith. The village remained ignorant of the indiscretion.

"Spot or Plain"

Some incidents I recall with a smile. Indian troops were billeted in Merville and its vicinity before the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. I remember my own medical officer being summoned to attend an accouchement in a village occupied some months earlier by Pathans. The villagers hung around the house in eager speculation as to whether the child would be white or coloured. The lady had been a War widow since August, 1914. No one suggested she had sinned; rather was this fresh venture a patriotic endeavour. British soldiers caught the spirit of the thing, and a corporal made a street-corner book with even odds on the baby being "spot" or "plain." In this instance "plain" won.

The wife of an estaminet keeper near Merville gave birth to twins, one white, one coloured. A new sign was thereupon hung outside the "Coq d'Or," or whatever may have been the erstwhile name of the inn, renaming it "Black and White." A fresh stock of whisky of that brand was laid in; and a notice invited visitors to view the twins, at an additional charge of 50 centimes. Great days for the estaminet!

In 1914 my own pleasant billet was a mansion in Armentières. It was sump-

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RESTING IN THE RUINS

A scene in a ruined building at Tilloy-les-Mofflaines during a rest and gossip by British troops. In March, 1918, Tilloy was in the XVII Corps area, and behind the 15th Division's front. The engagement known as the Battle of Arras, fought on March 28th, brought the enemy nearly, but not quite, to the village—the 15th Division being obliged to retire to within half-a-mile of it. This proved, however, to be the limit of the enemy's advance in the Arras region.

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tuously furnished and the housekeeper would provide me with a hot bath and steaming cocoa afterwards. While I was bathing one day, a vast shell exploded in an upper room and showered the bathroom with plaster and glass. I rushed headlong below in wet nakedness, to meet the astonished housekeeper on the narrow stairway!

In one village I slept in the bakehouse, always warm in a bitter winter; and I had a billet, to which I would often return for a fleeting visit, in the picturesque village of Picquigny. That was exceptional, for in general men return voluntarily only to places where they have suffered: there are no pilgrimages to rest camps.

There was wonderful bathing in the River Somme, fortunately immune from the visitations of those hostile aeroplanes which would sometimes descend upon thousands of naked bathers disporting themselves on the sands of La Panne.

I frequently hear men say, "The happiest days of my life were during the War." It is a claim made more and more frequently as the War years recede. In contemplation, the thought, often unuttered, deeply impresses the mind. In the front lines, and away from such crudely-conceived and brutal exhibitions as the "Bull Ring" at Etaples, men were free, and far less shackled then than they are in peace time by bonds of wages and economic fear. I was at one with Nature, dug into her very womb.

Freedom in Adversity

Food and drink and warmth were provided. I possessed hours in which I was utterly free to contemplate the world. What glorious orchestration, during a lull in the thunderous crash of battle, was the sound of birds chirruping at dawn in the shell-torn branches! What a feast was a rasher of bacon after days of "bully" or no rations at all! How glowing a wash in hot water, or the plunge in a river, after weeks of mud or battle-dust! What relief to be free from lice!

For thousands, the stars spread overhead across the great panoply of heaven were a new wonder. The dawn, almost always fraught with terror, arrested the senses by its marvellous gradations of colour and light. How sensuous the midday sleep, kissed by the hot sun, on the firestep of a trench! What rare refreshment the deep slumber in a dug-out, in rich companionship, after a battle! How astonishing was the sense of freedom, even though Death sat beside me!

A remarkable paradox is, therefore, presented. Man, massed and marshalled

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A STREET IN MOISLAINS

This village stands on the Tortille—which is also a continuation of the Canal du Nord—6 km. north-north-east of Péronne. There is a wood bearing the same name as the village, and this momentarily entered the news when the British took possession of the western half of it during their cautious pursuit of the retreating Germans on March 15th, 1917. Previously Moislains had been concerned largely with aerial activity, a German aeroplane having been brought down near it on August 23rd, 1916, and a French air raid having been made here the following October.

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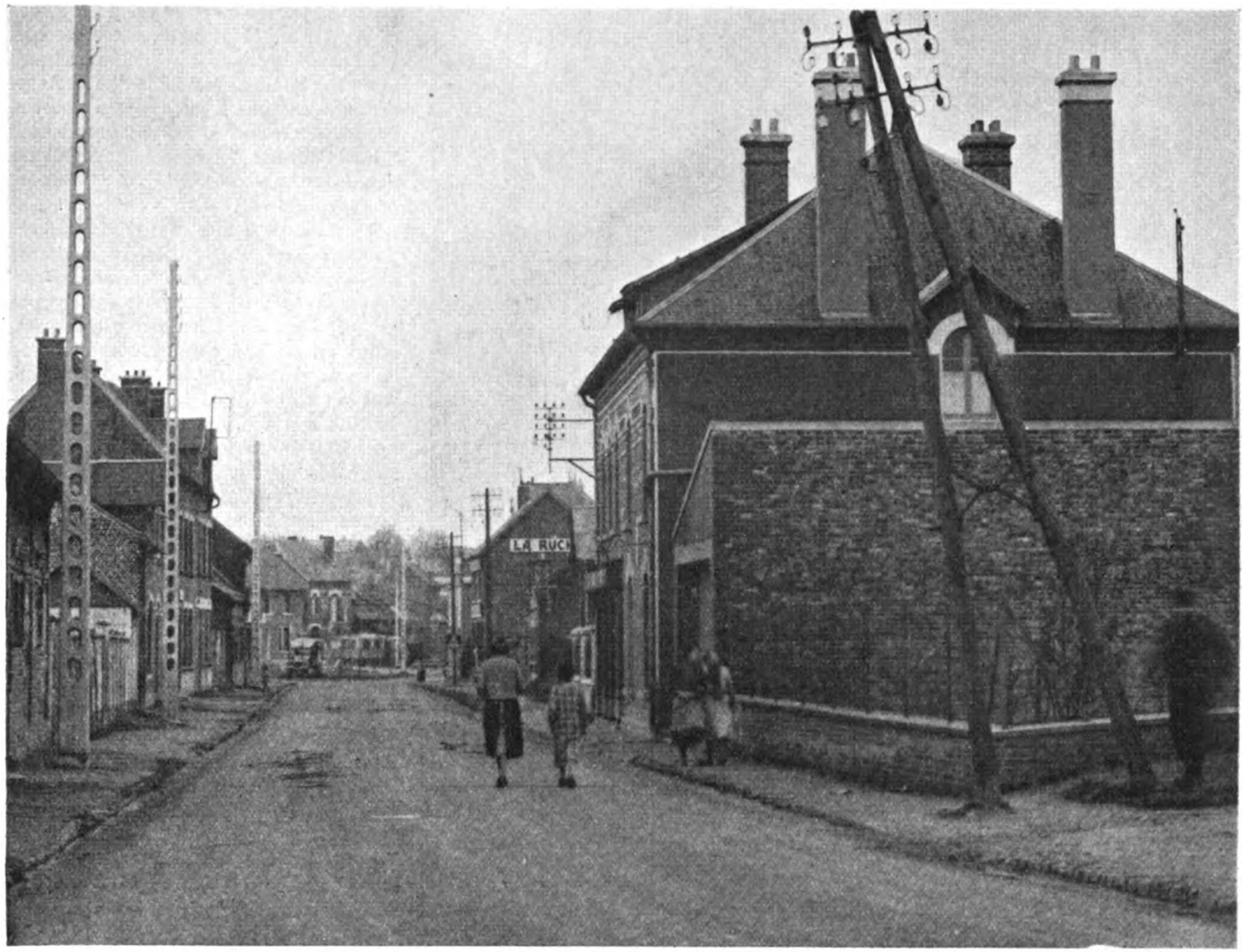

Photo: G. T. Watson.

MOISLAINS: THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE

Part of the artillery of the VII Corps was occupying Moislains on the morning of March 23rd, 1918. Very early in the day the 9th Division was ordered to retire on a line which included this village at its southern extremity. The retirement was carried out amid heavy fighting, the 27th Brigade being forced to abandon Moislains proper and hold the high ground behind it, while a gap of 1,000 yards developed on its right. However, the brigade maintained its position until evening, when it was ordered to withdraw further, in company with the rest of the corps.

as never before in human history. Man, bound by a thousand restraints of the military machine. Man, ordered in all the trivial circumstance of his being. Yet, even at the moment of zero hour, when perhaps he most nearly greeted death, man was never so happy. But then values had all changed for the man in the line. Be he butcher or baker, clerk or artisan, student, lawyer, what-not, his concern in life was no longer the economic struggle, with all its attendant anxieties. We enjoyed life itself.

The more fleeting the aspect given to life by outward circumstance, the greater the joy in contemplation of it. The few wild strawberries suddenly encountered amid the carnage of Mametz Wood were imbued with far more sweetness than platefuls swamped with cream. It is extraordinarily difficult for the warrior to analyse what were the feelings which contributed to this astonishing sense of individual freedom, and the happiness derived therefrom. There is little gentleness between men, save in war. Civil life often seems hedged around with prohibitions that make the term liberty a mockery. There man is stifled; in war he is released.

Fatal Fascination

The soldier, possessing nothing, is yet king of the world. The conventional mind, experienced only in artificially provided amusements, cannot even begin to appreciate such balsam. Yet we do not tire easily of our pleasures, and the pleasure of danger is no exception. Few pleasures, moreover, contribute nobility to man.

We poured out and passed along countless stories like that of the Jock and the Cockney in No Man's Land. Both were wounded, the Scot in the leg, the Londoner only slightly.

"'Ere, Jock," said the Cockney, "Get up on my back, and I'll carry you back to our lines."

"No fear," replied the Jock; "ye'll get the V.C., and I'll get my back full of bullets!"

There is the tale of a certain general descending upon the Christmas leave-train at Vlamertinghe in 1917, when snow lay on the ground. Doors and windows were fast closed, and men had succeeded in creating an almighty "fug" to keep away the bitterness of the night.

Came the General, with A.D.C., flinging wide the doors one by one, as

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Photo: A. J. Insall.

AN ESTAMINET AT ANNEZIN

Annezin is a suburb on the western side of Béthune, and the estaminet shown is the " À La Fanfare." Here a concert party named " The Pedlars " had its origin and used to perform ; and a Frenchman who once used to play the concertina with the troupe recently assured our photographer that " The Pedlars " belonged to the 51st (Highland) Division. This, however, has not been anywhere confirmed, and it rests with readers to settle the point.

in stentorian tones the greeting was given : " I, Sir ——— ——— ———, your Corps Commander, wish you a Happy Christmas ! "

As one door was suddenly and violently flung open, a voice from within roared : " And I, the Prince of Wales, tell you to shut that b—— door ! "

The streets of Amiens, festive even though sandbagged, and finally heavily shelled, were always thronged with troops, mostly going on, or returning from, leave. There would be many, also, spending one day of relaxation from the front line, who had " lorry-jumped " or ridden in from every outlying point of the fan of which Amiens was the pivot.

The Godbert was a famous meeting-place, while even the élite among gourmets would dine with satisfaction at the Café de la Paix and at " Jimmy's Bar." It was said that the city was honeycombed with spies, mostly women. It is possible ; anyhow, there were plenty of women. The Assistant A.P.M. of Amiens possessed a high reputation for efficiency ; and the justice of the A.P.M. himself was tempered with mercy. Rather than lead young men, whose heads had suffered from the unaccustomed wine and liberty, to detention and court-martial, he kept them privily until sobered, and then despatched them back to their units armed with the best possible excuses.

Horse-racing at Ayette

Back-area entertainments of great popularity were the race-meeting and horse show. Skill in improvisation, no less than enthusiasm, produced a memorable race-meeting upon the sward of Ayette in May, 1917, after we had been severely mauled in the first assault upon the Hindenburg Line. " The Arras Spring Meeting," as it was known, produced an enclosure and grandstand " For Country Gentlemen and Officers only," with the added legend : " Beware of Pickpockets."

Tattersall's Ring, the Judge's box, paddock, and weighing-in rooms, were all improvised. Even " Charlie's Bar " reappeared, with its accustomed popularity. One brigadier drove a four-in-hand on to the course, his own two chargers acting as leaders, and a G.S. waggon embellished by pioneers representing a coach. Bookmakers, in top-hats and bowlers, were swarming, and the odds changed wildly. " Housey ! Housey ! " and " Crown and Anchor " boards appeared in broad daylight, patronised even by the " Red-caps."

Entries numbered hundreds, including many mules ; and the names of the runners expressed the spirit of the warrior. Three mules of vicious tendency were called Faith, Hope, and Charity—" the most vicious of these is Charity." Among animals as hobby and tufted as only the after-effects of a winter's campaign could make light-draught horses, were to be found such classics as " Flying Fox," " Persimmon," " Lemberg," " Napoo " ; while others favoured the topical—" Umteen, "

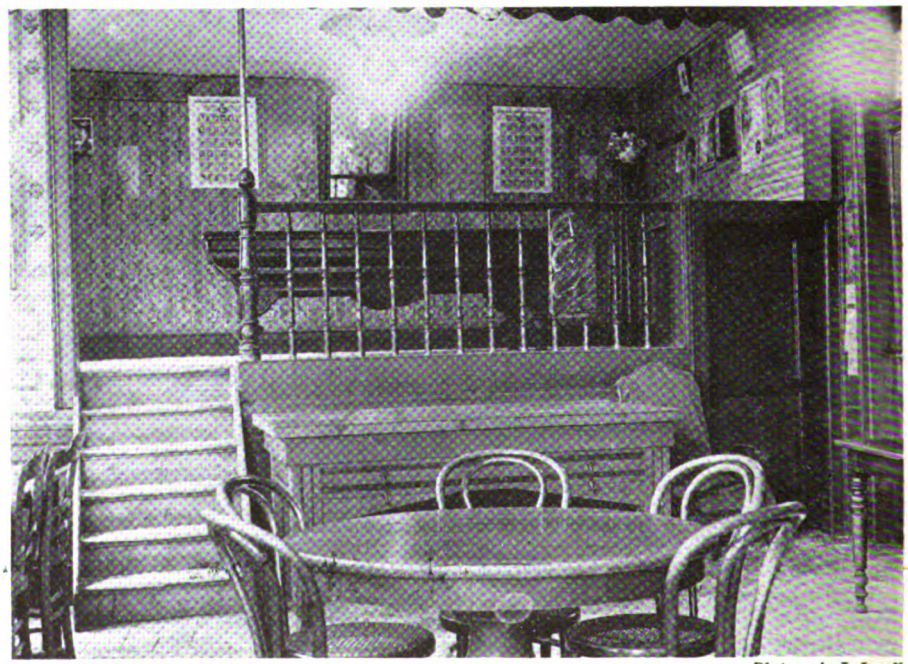

Photo: A. J. Insall.

INTERIOR OF THE " À LA FANFARE "

This photograph—which, like the one above, is a contemporary picture—shows the stage on which " The Pedlars " used to perform, and also the very billiard table once played on by British troops. Readers may recall that a concert party belonging to the 51st Division was illustrated on page 431 of this work, the view having been taken in 1917 at Bailleul-aux-Cornailles.

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From BLAIRVILLE to MERCATEL

Then and Now

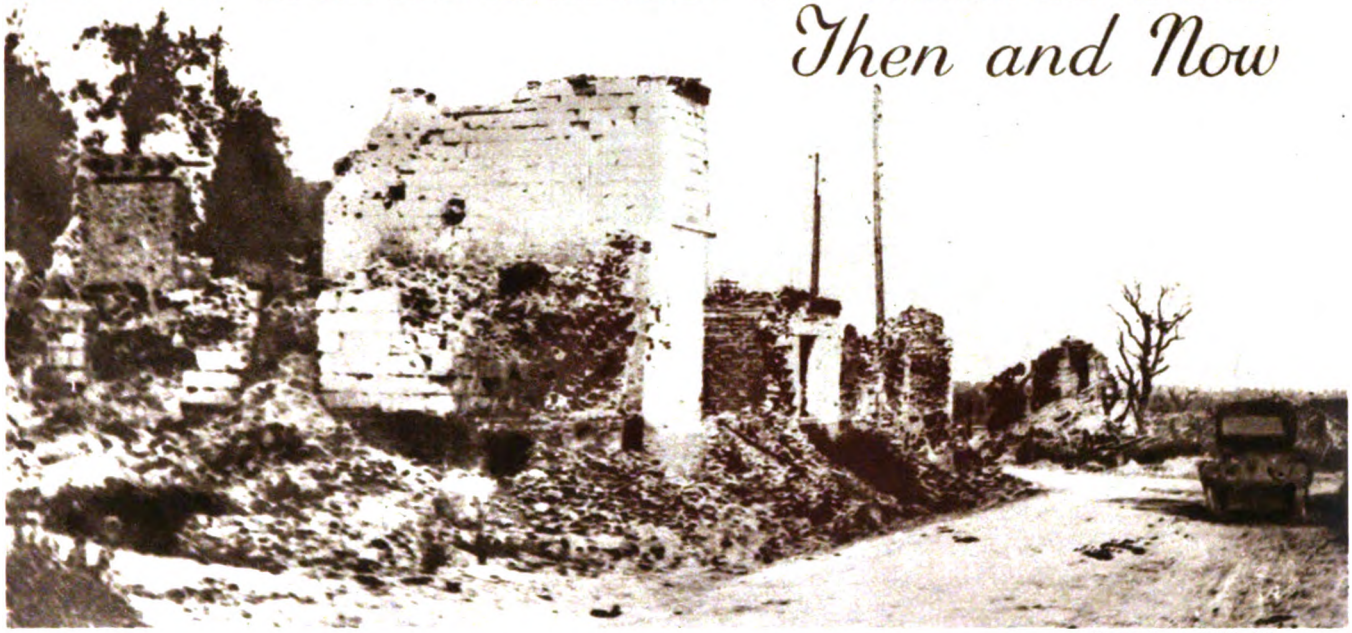

Photo: Imperial War Museum

RUSTIC SCENERY

The village of Blairville—equally often spelt Blaireville, although both are correct—is situated 8½ km. south-south-west of Arras, and 1 km. east of the Amiens—Acheux road. During 1915 and 1916 it lay just outside the Allied lines, first of all opposite the I Colonial Corps of the French Tenth Army, and later opposite the VI Corps of the British Third Army. It had passed into our possession before the Hindenburg Line retirement of 1917, but still had seen little actual fighting. The present view of the ruins was taken in June, 1917.

Photo: G. T. Watson

STILL UNDER RECONSTRUCTION

It would be true to say that despite its ruinous condition, due to relatively long-range shelling, Blairville never did see anything worth calling a fight. In the spring of 1918 the enemy threatened it, as he threatened most places anywhere near the line; but the Arras battle of March 28th brought him no nearer than the Mercatel spur and the country east of Boiry-Ste. Rictrude—a matter of 5 km. or more distant. At that time the Guards Division held the line in front of Blairville.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE MOULDERING CORPSE OF FICHEUX

Again dating from June, 1917, this photograph shows a village 2 km. east of Blairville, at the junction of two cross-country roads. These roads, after progressing eastward as a single route through Rivière and Blairville, at Ficheux diverge respectively toward Mercatel —Neuville-Vitasse and Boisleux-au-Mont—Boiry-Becquerelle. Ficheux is also within 3 km. of the important Arras—Amiens railway, which runs to the east of it.

Photo: G. T. Watson

GOING HOME FROM WORK

A peaceful evening scene in modern Ficheux. Like Blairville, the village saw little or no direct fighting, although in August-September, 1918, there was great activity on the railway mentioned above. Here the enemy sited his main resistance, and on August 23rd the British launched a big attack which extended as far north as Mercatel, 4 km. east of Ficheux. The latter must at that time have seen masses of supporting troops pass through its humble main street, and probably some of the 100 tanks which participated in the attack. The assault was a big success, the German lines being penetrated to a depth of two miles.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A MERCATEL TABLEAU

Mercatel lies just west of the main Arras-Péronne highway, upon the cross-country road from Ficheux to Neuville-Vitasse. It is nearer to Arras than either of the villages previously illustrated, the distance being under 6 km. This photograph, taken in 1917, shows the havoc wrought by various bombardments prior to the Hindenburg Line withdrawal. The British were in Mercatel by the beginning of April, our line then running from Beaurains to Sélency.

Photo: G. T. Watson

CONTRASTS

An old farm-waggon redolent of pre-war peace, an " elephant hut " left over from the War itself, and a dazzlingly new post-war church —such is Mercatel as shown in this illustration. One of the features of the resurrected village is that every householder is provided with an allotment, an excellent scheme which is probably not unconnected with the " adoption " of Mercatel by Darlington after the Armistice. Old soldiers must find it amusing, if they visit this region Twenty Years After, to bowl merrily in an omnibus along a route which for so long ran into the German lines just here.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

WHAT HAPPENED TO MERCATEL'S FORMER CHURCH

Unlike Blairville and Ficheux, Mercatel became involved in the fighting of both March and August, 1918. In March, the Arras battle of the 28th pushed our line back from near Hénin to within a few hundred yards east of Mercatel, which was in the area of the 8th Brigade. This brigade belonged to the 3rd Division of the VI Corps, upon whose front some of the fiercest fighting of the day took place.

Photo: G. T. Watson

THE NEW CHURCH FROM THE EAST

"As the sun set behind rain-clouds, there also vanished the hopes which O. H. L. had placed on the attack. 'Mars' [the German code-name for the Arras assault], to whom so much blood was offered, was unable to break open the British Arras salient and give a fresh aspect to the great battle on the northern wing." Thus a German writer, as quoted by the British *Official History*, sums up the results of March 28th, 1918. The enemy kept his new line until our attack of August 23rd, when Mercatel once more receded from the vicinity of the firing-line.

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Photo: A. J. Insall.

ST. POL FROM THE WEST

A view of the little town from the Hesdin road. St. Pol lies in a valley, upon either bank of the River Ternoise. This stream, which rises not far east of the town, is none other than the upper reaches of the Canche, and enters the sea at Étaples. St. Pol also lay on the important behind-the-line main artery from north to south. All day and all night, during the War, its natural quiet was disturbed by traffic of every kind.

"Farrier's Friend"—the unshoeable—"U-boat," "Bing Boys," "George," and "Alfred."

The staff, enjoying the privilege of frequent leave in London and Paris, favoured the stage, thus—"Gaby," "Delysia," "Zena," and "Phyllis." The races for various classes were named after villages of the immediate battle-field—the Adinfer Stakes; the Boiry Maiden Plate; the St. Léger Stakes; the Ayette Maiden Plate; and the Prix d'Alphonse, an open flat race for mules, many of which, having been goaded and dragged to the post, "took charge" when the flag fell and bolted for their lives, scattering the crowd in wild confusion. While watchful aeroplanes kept a vigil overhead, a gracious French countess, like a figure of porcelain, appeared to present the prizes.

"What Have You Salved To-day?"

"Cleanliness comes next to godliness" was an injunction which met the eye as one left the line, with the question, also, upon a vast notice-board—"What have you salved to-day?" All of which meant that the "spit and polish" of billets must be translated to the trenches, or at least to those safe for a staff desiring to keep upon a high pedestal the customs of the parade-ground.

Some quiet sectors had "show" trenches. Rifles and machine guns were polished as never before. Baby faces with scarcely a hair were shaved regularly. Spaced along the front and support trenches were gas-gongs—inverted brass shell-cases—polished every day. Bomb-boxes were built with pyramidal precision, flanked on either side with tins of lime and veronal-sprayers. The rum jar squatted flatly in regal majesty upon his throne.

Each trench received its name and notice-board. When a new alleyway had been prepared, there was as much cogitation over the christening of the child as over a baptism in some historic family. But in the matter of immersion it was left to the enemy to decide. Invariably these new babies were baptised before the second day, as is customary with children whose life is expected to be short. The main idea in trenches was, therefore, to keep them clean "at all costs."

The other major diversion for the purpose of keeping us in good military fettle was the wiring party. To ensure that these parties disported themselves properly, an elaborate cross-columned report was designed. This had to be sent by workers "through the usual channels" to those who ordained our destiny. It was a kind of clocking-in system without a clock, offering no pay for overtime, and no workman's compensation. There was no column in the Army Form for casualties.

Since it was a highly perilous business to stand in No Man's Land, bent double, and so presenting a most favourable target to the enemy, whose machine-gun bullets flicked around, and then, as a

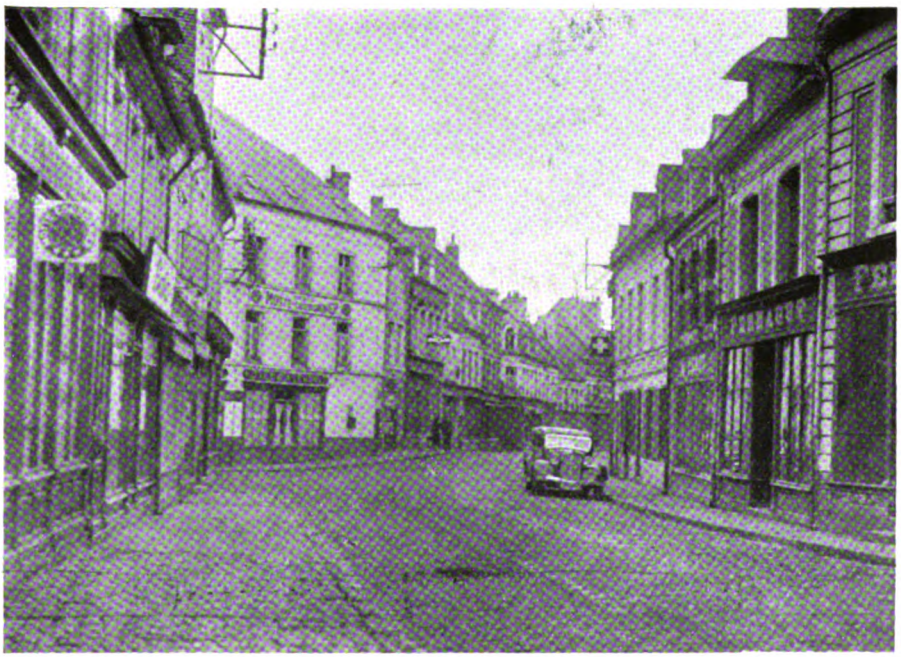

Photo: A. J. Insall.

ST. POL: THE MAIN STREET

In the area of St. Pol our "dummy" concentration was made, in the early summer of 1918, to deceive the enemy as to the whereabouts of our coming offensive. The impression of a vast gathering-together of tanks was produced, and on clear days, when it was guessed that enemy pilots would be over our lines on reconnaissance, the machines co-operated with infantry in seemingly elaborate manœuvres.

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rocket soared into the air, to be obliged to plunge face downward among the wire and tins and gangrenous muck—we devised a plan. The work-charts invited an easy lie, but the inspecting staff, like foremen on a job, resented lies. "Number of coils of wire laid out." Good enough! The inspecting staff would not put his head over the parapet. Not if he knew it!

Concerning Barbed Wire

So, though good defences were made, the zeal of the troops in the consumption of wire was such that battalion vied with battalion, and brigade with brigade, in laying out masses of the stuff. Up came the coils to the trenches; and duly, just as they came, they were laid out in No Man's Land. It was even a popular rumour that at one time German patrols came over to the British side of No Man's Land and collected for their own use the coils of wire they found there.

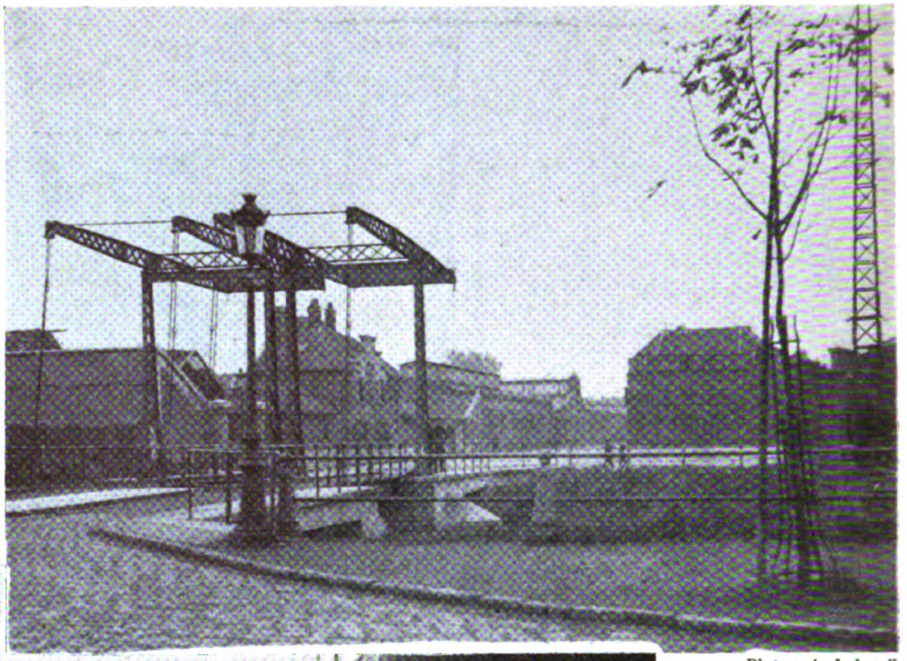

Photo: A. J. Insall.

ON THE LYS

A modern tip-bridge over the Lys in Armentières. In the centre background is the slaughter-house; on the right, the notorious "Black Cat" establishment, which many, no doubt, will remember, but about which, in decorous times of peace, the less said the better. . . .

Photo: A. J. Insall.

A STREET IN ARMENTIÈRES

A view looking westward down one of the lesser shopping streets, and affording a charming glimpse of the tower of the new Hôtel de Ville at the far end. This building, in the reconstruction of which the æsthetic and the practical have been cared for with a fine sense of balance, is an admirable monument to the energy of the people of Armentières. The place suffered badly on many occasions, but especially so in April, 1918, when the 34th Division was hurled out of the town on the 10th of the month. All the bridges across the river were destroyed at this time.

And so back to billets. If you should go to the Somme, you'll find as good a drink and as tasty an omelette as can be imagined at the Café Marquant on the Courcelette cross-roads; while High Wood yet smells the same. "What have you salved to-day?" How little did they know! "What have you scrounged to-day?" Ha! Ha!

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CHAPTER LXXVIII

1918 IN SALONICA

The closing year of the Great War was by far the most dramatic of the four. Beginning with the prodigious German offensive on the Western Front, the outlook for the Allied forces was, for a brief while, obscure. But as the months passed a change came over the situation. Almost imperceptibly the armies of the Central Powers began to falter. Like some massive structure in which minute but significant cracks had appeared, the enemy began to weaken. His morale deteriorated, and by the autumn he was defeated and knew it. In the following chapter is told the story of the closing period in Salonica.

OLD Salonicans who served on the Struma Front and its line of communications will never forget the Seres Road, which stretched for 70-odd kilometres over plain and hill from Salonica to our outposts in the valley. It was flanked, for the best part of the way, by camps, hospitals, dumps, and depôts, which usually called themselves merely " Kilo So-and-So " to indicate their distance from the base, one pedantically dubbing itself " Kilo Sixty-one and a Quarter."

The Road Which Never Arrived

Guvezne, 26 kilos distant, boasted a name, because it was a railhead and busy centre; so did Likovan and Lahana, two villages marking the road at its highest point before it wound down to the Struma plain to cross the river at Orliak bridge. This Seres Road was a paradoxical road so far as we were concerned, for it never led to Seres, which was in Bulgar occupation.

Its primitive villages lay, in most cases, a little distance off it, in the hope of evading the attentions of the *comitajis* and free-lance brigands who haunted it in pre-War days and exacted such toll from Salonica merchants that the latter would frequently wait, mediæval fashion, until they were in sufficient numbers to form a " safety-first " caravan.

Many of these brigands became muleteers and road-labourers in the B.S.F. Mr. V. J. Seligman, in *The Salonica Side-Show*, remarks: " I am told that there are two harmless-looking muleteers working for us in the village of Sacava on the Plain, liable to undergo Field Punishment if their harness is not properly polished, who boast that before the War they killed between them sixty-one men ! "

This one highway had to carry the supplies for something like 50,000 men. Despite the immense amount of money, material, and labour expended on it—including stone from seven quarries employing about £50,000 worth of machinery and 2,000 men: sappers, natives, prisoners of war—parts of it became a ruin in winter under the wheels of three-ton lorries. For ten weeks or so, from January to March one year, the lorries could negotiate only 35 miles of it, the remaining ten miles to the line being covered by limber transport and mules. The strain on the drivers was severe. Mr. Ward Price, in *The Story of the Salonica Army*, says of them:

" Fine fellows those M.T. drivers proved themselves to be. They started driving at four in the morning; they were often not back in Salonica till nine o'clock at night. Sometimes they had had nothing but cold bully and biscuit all that time. Frequently they were so dead beat at the end of their run that they had to be lifted off their seats. Long after dark the long convoys were streaming up and down the endless hills, with headlights gleaming like a string of incandescent pearls.

" It can be no comfortable job to steer a three-ton lorry all day and half the night over such a surface, and that there was danger in it was not seldom shown by the sight of a lorry upside down on the steep slope beside the road, its driver having blundered in the dark."

Praise for the Transport

The same writer called the supply and transport service in Macedonia " the most important branch of our whole military organisation; on it everything, literally, depends." General Milne, the C.-in-C., accorded it special praise in a despatch of December, 1916. The R.A.M.C. ambulance service—to say nothing of its patients, who often were almost jolted out of their skins on their way back from the Struma with wounds or sickness—also had to suffer from the shortcomings of that road.

In winter there were heavy snowstorms to contend with, and the bitter, biting " Vardar wind " (Siberian vintage), which induced Mr. Seligman to suggest that " the gentleman in Victor Hugo's poem who was driven mad by the wind which came across the mountains, must have been a Macedonian." In summer there were the blinding heat, dust, and glare which compelled the authorities to furnish drivers with blue veils that made the upper half of them resemble belles of the " Naughty 'Nineties "—or lodging-house landladies, as the case may be.

A convoy officer in a car was supposed to set the pace, at a mean six to seven miles per hour; but as the " Tin Lizzies " which later superseded the Vauxhalls and Sunbeams had but two speeds—one round about 4 m.p.h., and the other 40—smooth progress was not easy. The whole ordeal was aptly summed up by an M.T. driver, who said, with embellishments unfit for print: " Next blinkin' war, Flying Corps for me ! "

Between the M.T. and the R.E. there was at times blue murder—verbal, at least. An R.E. section would repair a length of the road; the officer in charge would gaze at his handiwork and say: " There ! Look at that ! You could *skate* on it ! " Then, in the distance, he would see a convoy of lumbering, lurching lorries approaching. They came. They passed. When he looked at his road again, it was, where impatient drivers had rounded corners carelessly, more like the Bay of Biscay in stormy weather.

Personalities of " The Road "

The road had its personalities, too. Mr. Seligman mentions a certain fierce R.E. colonel who used to prowl up and down it, at all hours of the day and night, looking for slackers and " lead-swingers." He could swear in six or seven languages. Even ex-Macedonian bandits paled when they saw this Big Bad Wolf loom over the skyline, for they could never get away with it, where he was concerned, just by spitting and mumbling " No compree."

History was also made by a certain

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE WINDING TRAIL

A steep, dusty, and circuitous—but highly efficient—road built by British engineers among the Macedonian mountains. Cloven largely from the solid and unaccommodating rock of which these mountains are composed, the hazardous route is carefully protected by a bank of the hewn-out stones; yet often exceedingly skilful driving would be needed to steer heavily-laden waggons round the hair-pin bends without disaster.

cavalry subaltern who, early in 1916, was entrusted with the job of reading to some Seres Road villagers a proclamation enjoining them to carry on with their peaceful pursuits, and assuring them that if they gave no trouble they would enjoy complete security. He started off in grand style, with an interpreter translating, but grew tired of the stilted official phrasing and launched into the famous speech of Marc Antony, beginning: "Friends, Romans, countrymen . . ."

He delivered it like a Henry Irving, and the effect on the natives was profound. The orator always claimed that it was that speech which ultimately won us the War—the Balkan part of it, anyway. . . . Try to imagine a German officer, committed to a similar duty, lapsing into Goethe!

Beyond the Seres Road—and the Doiran—there was always, of course, the War. On February 25th, 1918, the 83rd Brigade made a big raid on Bursuk and adjacent villages north of the Butkovo river; sappers put a flying bridge across, then a pontoon bridge on which the 2nd King's Own and 1st York and Lancasters crossed and penetrated 2¼ miles to Porlida. Such diversions, in a wide valley under the Belashitza range, with its lofty Bulgar observation-posts, were nervy affairs. In this one we lost 3 killed, 16 wounded.

Early in April the C.-in-C. was informed that the Germans might call on the Bulgar forces to support the offensive on the Western Front. Plans should therefore be made to hold them in the Balkans by "increased activity," and an offensive if necessary. "Increased activity" meant local raids and artillery bombardment. On the Struma it was largely a "free-lance" affair, sector commanders of the 27th Division being given discretion in arranging raids and ambushes.

Grim and Costly Sorties

On one of these sorties, 4th K.R.R.C. and 4th Rifle Brigade troops of the 80th Brigade encountered a Bulgar patrol in the early morning of the 15th near Prosenik. "C" Coy., K.R.R.C., came under intense fire and was rushed by the enemy, who caught the left platoon in the open and shot down most of it, only 16 men escaping. In the evening the battalion was withdrawn.

The 28th Division sent patrols before dawn one morning to occupy Kyupri and Bairakli. The Bulgars also advanced, and the patrols retired, fighting desperately, on Kumli. One platoon had to repulse five attacks before it was finally rushed and surrounded, the enemy killing or capturing the whole rearguard. Our casualties were 60 out of twice that number of troops.

That was the kind of price we had to pay for "increased activity," for you cannot harry and nag at an enemy without provoking reprisals. Raid casualties from the night of the 14th to that of the 19th totalled 349, including 199 missing; but, of course, there was nothing of consequence to report from the Salonica Front. . . .

On April 16th four officers and 23 men of the 65th Brigade were given a risky job which at least stirred their sense of adventure. Embarking at Doiran station in the dark, in four small boats, they rowed across to derelict Doiran town, behind the Bulgar front line, to capture prisoners.

Stealthily they explored the streets of what had been, before the War, a small lakeside resort, but encountered not a living soul! Only a few hundred yards away were trenches and posts manned by Bulgars, yet Doiran itself was silent as a deserted graveyard.

On the 18th, our guns began a bombardment of that scarred front-line hill, Petit Couronné, and an adjacent work, o.6. On the third day small daylight-raids were launched against the positions; and two big ones, between Petit Couronné and the lake, were launched on the last night. In one daylight-raid a party of the 9th King's Own entered the enemy works, bombed the dug-outs, and brought back two prisoners without suffering a casualty—no easy feat.

In the early hours of the 22nd, positions o.2 and o.3 in this sector were

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raided by the 12th Lancashire Fusiliers, 65th Brigade. There was a fierce fight at 0.2, where the Bulgars stood on their parapet to fire and pitch bombs at our men. Leading platoons entered the trenches, but could not remain long, our casualties in the raid—61—being more than doubled by the subsequent artillery retaliation.

Attack Behind Shields

During a heavy bombardment of the Bulgar Doiran positions in May, 0.2 was again raided by the 11th Royal Welch Fusiliers, carrying body-shields. A large concrete pill-box was blown up, and a number of the enemy bayoneted in the trenches or bombed in dug-outs. Our casualties were 81—over half the raiding force—but, thanks to the shields, few were killed, the majority being wounded in the legs.

Apart from such raids—which were sufficiently disturbing, in that they provoked the enemy artillery to action—life on the Doiran front, up to the preparations for the big September attack, was a matter of routine. During spells out of the line at places like Gugunci, the main consideration was: which sector are we bound for next?

"A" and "B," near the lake, based on camps in Swindon and Wylye ravines, immediately behind the front trenches, were "hot shops," always in some sort of trouble because near to the Bulgar line. At night the approach-roads and tracks gave you the uncomfortable feeling that you were dangerously overlooked and overheard; and, on coming in to relieve or going out, you cursed roundly if the mules and limbers made a row or hoofs kicked up sparks, for, sure enough, a salvo would drop over.

Westward, opposite "E" and "F" sectors, No Man's Land widened, and there was a "cushy" feeling of greater security. Also, the ground was a little less rocky and barren, and in some of the ravines you might even find copses of sycamore and groves of mulberry, which lent a beauty to moonlit nights and reminded one poignantly of woodland walks at home.

"A" sector had one compensation, though, in the glimpses, on clear days, through camouflage screens by Wooded Point, of the cobalt-blue lake, and of the grey Belashitza Mountains beyond. Many a time the writer risked a bullet from a sniper just to feast his eyes on that Balkan grandeur.

This year was marked by the ascendancy of the Allies in the air. Our squadrons were reinforced by fast "S.E.5A" and "Bristol" machines, and early in May Sopwith "Camels" arrived. New flights were formed, and No. 150 Squadron practically drove

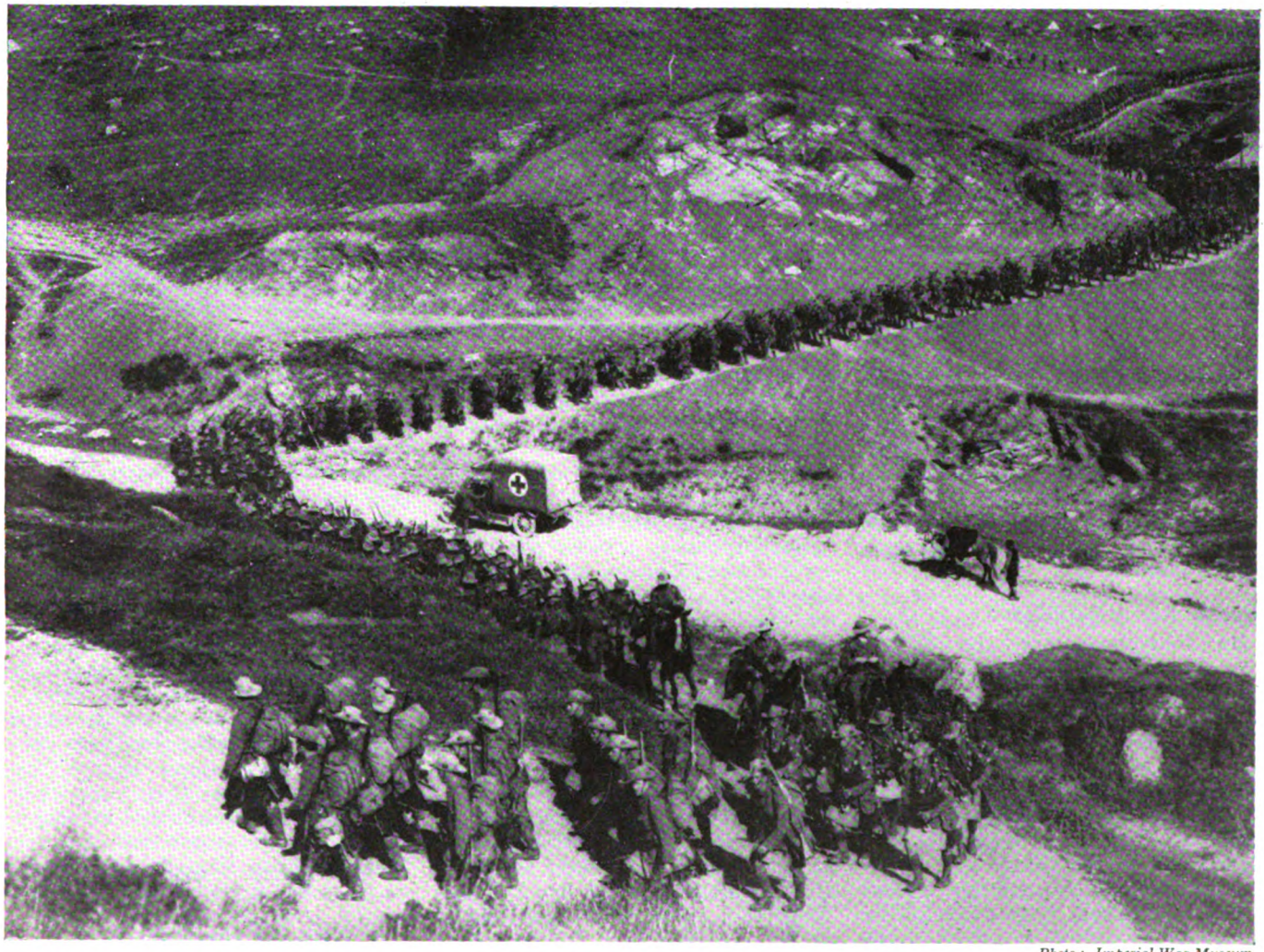

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WITH BAGPIPES PLAYING

A fine picture of troops on the march along a typical Balkan highway: a Scottish battalion is about to ascend a mountain-road from its camp in the plain. Scottish troops in the Salonica Expeditionary Force included Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Cameron Highlanders, Royal Scots, Royal Scots Fusiliers, and Scottish Rifles. The great majority of Scotsmen in Macedonia in 1918 saw fighting on the Doiran front.

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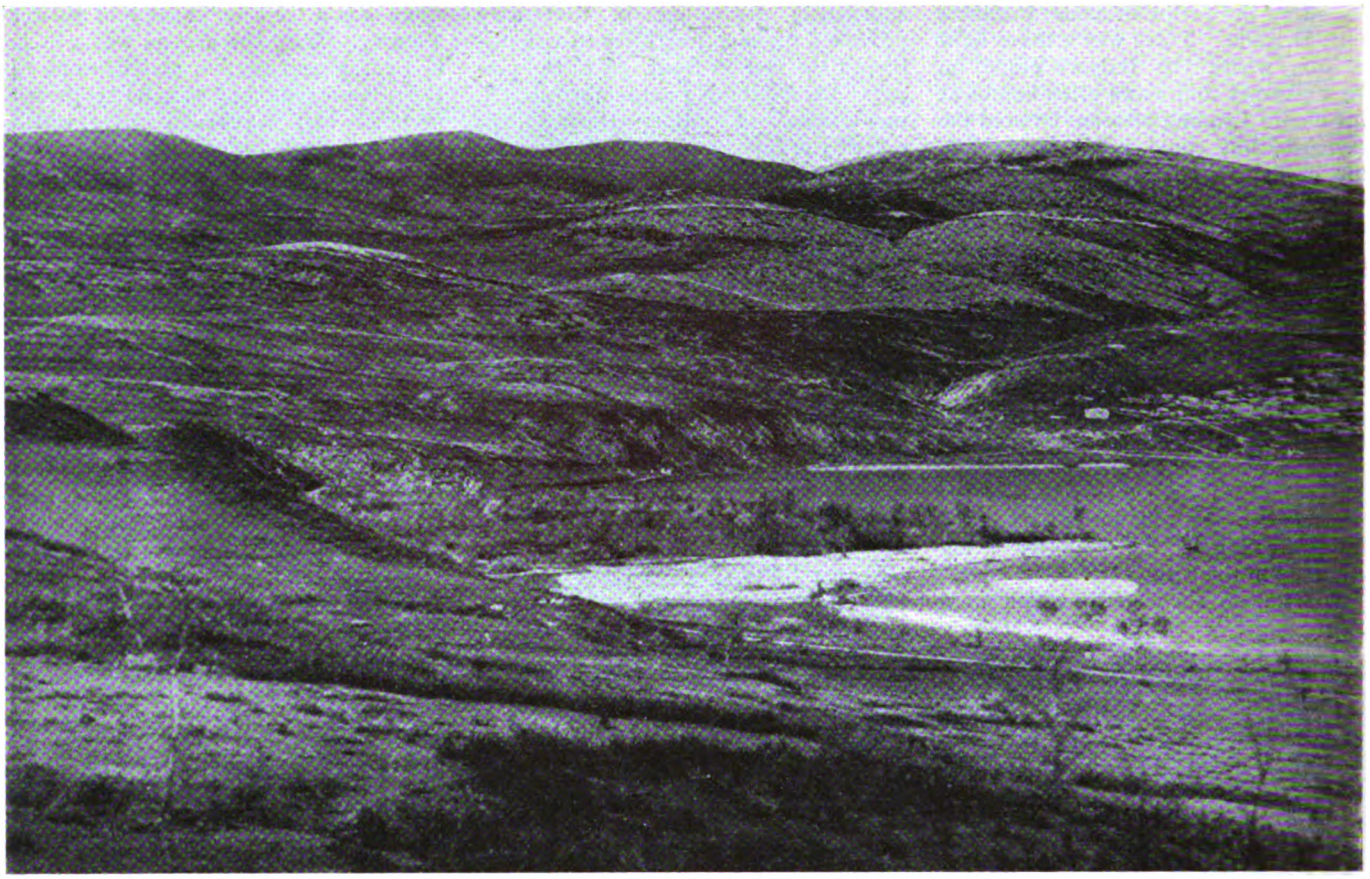

A PANORAMA OF LAKE DOIRAN—

Although fighting occurred, at one period or another, in many areas, the British soldier who was in Salonica during the War remembers above all two sectors—Doiran and Struma. Here and on the opposite page we reproduce a magnificent view of the south-western, or most important, side of Lake Doiran. In this half of the picture may be seen, along the skyline from left to right, Pip 3, Pip 2, Pip 1, and Grand Couronné. The white-topped hill below and between Pip 3 and Pip 2 is Hill 340. Below Pip 1, with a trench running across it, is the Hilt. Immediately below Grand Couronné is the Orb. Teton Ravine runs to the left of the large white house on the further shore of the lake.

the Germans from the sky, destroying 34 enemy machines, capturing two, losing only one. In a raid on Drama aerodrome on March 22nd, four hangars were hit; and on May 8th our machines peppered it again, this time with 4,500 lb. of bombs, seriously damaging both machines and hangars. On the 23rd, Hudova was raided.

Greek Army Mobilises

In December, 1917, the British, French, and United States governments had each voted £10,000,000 to equip and supply the Greek Regular Army. In the following spring it was mobilised, the Greek 1st Division moving towards the Struma for attachment to the British XVI Corps, and nine Greek battalions replacing three French Colonial battalions east of the Vardar.

"In general," comments the excellent Official Historian,[1] "the Greek soldier appeared to British observers to be brave and dashing but volatile, likely to be better in attack than in defence, and to be subject to fits of depression and to political influences if kept too long in reserve or on a very quiet front. Few troops improved more rapidly under active service conditions."

This judgment was largely borne out in the September attacks, when one saw the Greeks march up to the line like a pack of boisterous schoolboys, shouting "Sofia! Sofia!" and then, in some cases, run pretty wild under the barrage and stampede back through our supports. Generally speaking, however, they did well against a foe in most essentials superior.

On a readjusted front, the British XVI Corps covered the Struma and Butkovo sectors, from the Gulf of Orfano to Lake Doiran, with the 27th and 28th Divisions, plus the Greek 1st Division, which held the line Ahinos—Komaryan, while the XII Corps covered the area from Doiran to the Vardar, with the 22nd and 26th Divisions. In January 1918 an 8-inch howitzer battery (424th Siege) arrived from Palestine to smash concrete shelters; while 12 Newton 6-inch trench mortars were also sent to the Doiran area. (These fired 50-lb. projectiles accurately up to 1,000 yards' range, and were later improved to fire at 2,000.)

Malaria was still a grave problem, though preventive measures in certain areas—especially in the 22nd Division's behind Doiran—greatly reduced the number of primary cases. Chronic cases, however, totalled some 15,000; and on the recommendation of Sir Ronald Ross, the malaria pioneer, a start was made with a scheme to return these to England and replace them with new drafts, 9,000 being evacuated. By July, nevertheless, there were still 13,812 sick and wounded in hospital—the majority of them malaria cases. Roughly 29,000 men had no leave for 2½ years, and 2,300 had none for three.

Speeding Up the Offensive

In June General Guillaumat was recalled to France to help stem the German offensive, and was succeeded

[1] *Military Operations, Macedonia*, ii, compiled by Capt. Cyril Falls.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

—AS THE BRITISH SOLDIER KNEW IT

The right-hand half of the photograph includes, on its left, the white mass of Doiran town, one or two of whose minarets can be detected even from the distance at which the camera is set. Continuing from left to right along the skyline, we come to Le Casque, at the extreme margin, then Black Hill and Piton Chauve. The Græco-Serbian frontier cuts the near shore of the lake at a point immediately below the centre of the town. The road seen running along the near shore leads to Doiran railway station, which is situated just out of sight on the right; the line is that which runs from Salonica to Istanbul (Constantinople). Lake Doiran measures about 4 miles by 5.

by General Franchet d'Espérey, a seasoned Moroccan campaigner. The new-comer's first task was to speed up plans for the offensive; for Germany was now too heavily occupied in the West to do much for her ally, and Bulgaria was in the throes of an internal crisis. Apart from military action, attempts were also to be made to get her out of the war by political pressure.

At a conference in Downing Street on September 4th, Guillaumat strongly urged immediate action on a big scale in the Balkans, and Mr. Lloyd George, Prime Minister, agreed. General Milne asked for more heavy howitzers, but could not get them; he also asked for 6-inch gas shells, but only about 3,000 rounds arrived on the eve of the attack, nearly all of which were expended during the first day on Bulgar battery positions. It was, however, found possible to increase the allotment of Lewis guns from 20 to 30 per battalion.

At this time the Allies could muster 26 divisions: nine Greek, six French, six Serbian, four British, one Italian; while another Greek division was due to arrive at Florina. This force was divided into four armies. General Milne had his own four divisions and five Greek, with a sixth Greek in the rear. The Allies' total strength was 291 battalions, 1,522 guns: the enemy's, 302 battalions, 1,597 guns. Only three German battalions, apart from some *Landsturm* on lines-of-communication, were now with the Bulgars, but six more were on the way.

The Bulgars and Germans had more machine guns, though the Bulgar weapons were not up to the standard of the French and British. The Allied rifle-strength was about 180,000, that of the enemy probably much higher. In the air the Allies could boast 200 machines to the enemy's 80. As to morale, the Bulgarian leaders were naturally depressed at the turn of events on the Western Front.

Two Attacks Impending

The British were to launch two simultaneous attacks: the chief by the XII Corps, with the 22nd Division and Greek Seres Division, against the Doiran positions which had withstood the attack of 1917; the second by the XVI Corps, with the Cretan Division supported by our 28th, against the crest of the Blaga Planina, a spur of the Belashitza range running down to the north shore of Lake Doiran. The first was to be preceded by an artillery concentration on the enemy's wire, and by gas shells.

In mid-August the 22nd Division was relieved for three weeks' training, in shade temperatures of 90 to 100 degrees. Observation-posts of steel or concrete were prepared for artillery and infantry, also deep dug-outs for command posts and telephone exchanges, forward concrete emplacements for guns, and light bridges to enable guns to cross trenches and ravines.

To delude the enemy, the British made a feint-attack on the Vardar, far to the west of Doiran, on September 1st. The 2nd Gloucesters and 10th Hampshires, 82nd Brigade, captured Roche Noire salient after practising over a replica of

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MONCHY-AU-BOIS

Showing the ruins of the village on June 30th, 1917, as they had been left three months earlier by the retirement to the Hindenburg Line. Monchy-au-Bois lies 5 km. almost due north of Gommecourt, on the road from Amiens to Arras *via* Acheux. On the eve of the First Battle of the Somme our line ran just west of here, the 37th Division, VII Corps, being opposite the village.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ROAD-MAKING AT MONCHY-AU-BOIS

Our long series of "Then and Now" photographs has shown clearly that, in general, the streets are the last portions of the rebuilt War villages to be put into repair. In March—April, 1918, Monchy-au-Bois lay in the VI Corps area, the Guards Division holding the sector of the line east of it. The village was not reached by the enemy, who managed to push no nearer to it than Ayette, even after the Battle of Arras on March 28th. There is no British cemetery here.

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the position for 10 days. The salient formed an area 100 yards square on the right bank of the Ljumnica stream, jutting out from the Bulgar lines, with ravines leading up to a strongly fortified, half-closed work.

Approaches were screened for an afternoon daylight attack, and our troops crossed 300 yards of ground to the enemy trenches at 5.30 p.m. The Hampshires suffered from the Bulgar barrage, which delayed them a little; on the left they met grim resistance, and could not get reports back for two hours owing to runner casualties. But on the right the Gloucesters captured the strong-point.

That night the 81st Brigade occupied enemy outposts from Roche Noire to the railway along the Vardar, and the British front line was now 300 to 500 yards from the main enemy line. In the early morning of the 2nd, the Bulgars barraged their lost positions and launched counter-attacks, which were repulsed. The two battalions there showed exceptional courage and grit under the heavy bombardment, for they could not dig in to any depth, owing to the rocky nature of the ground. Our casualties were 298, but we had achieved our purpose—to draw the enemy reserves to this area.

Franco-Serbian Victory

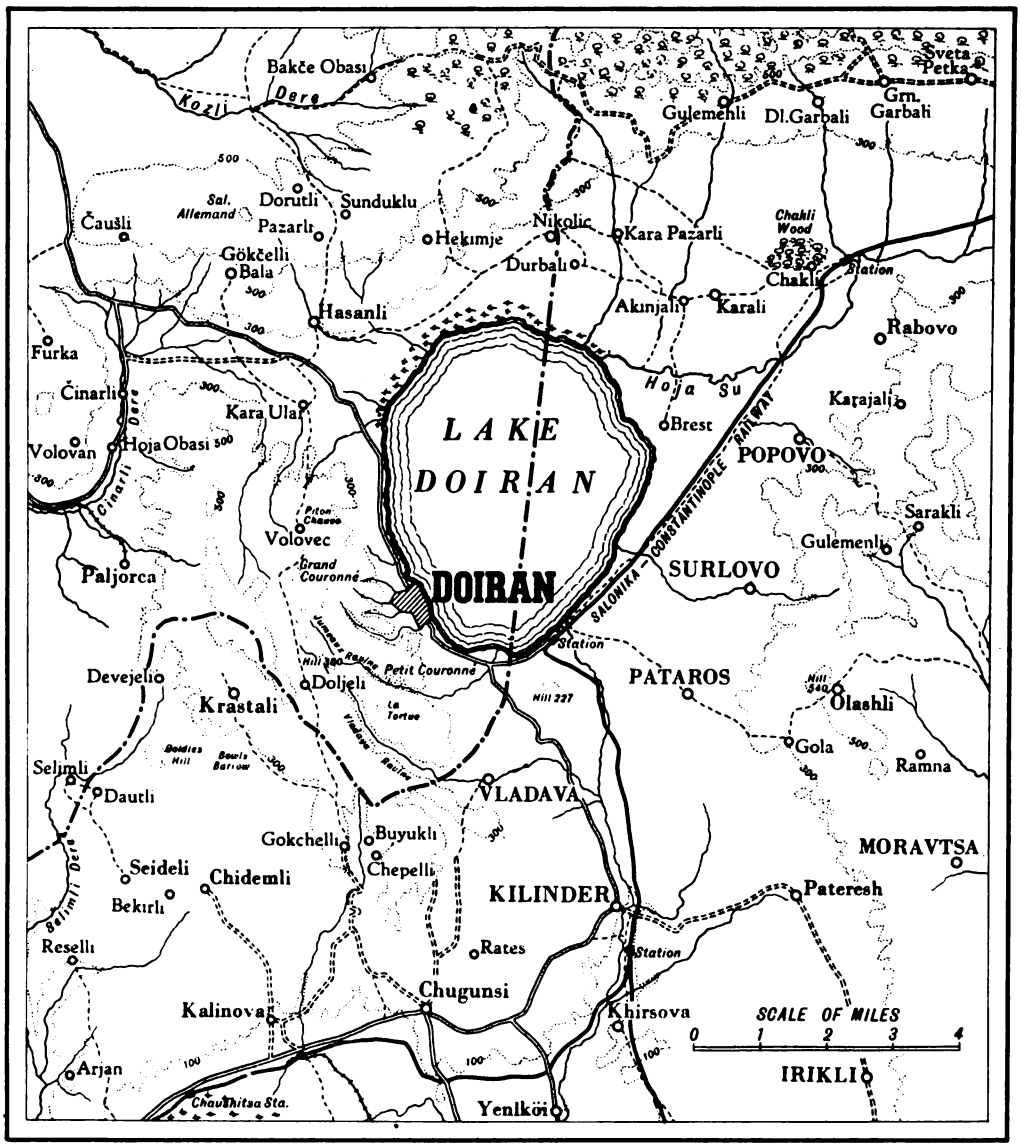
On the 8th, Greek troops on the Struma made another feint advance, far over to the east. All was now ready for the main push, and on the 15th the Franco-Serbian Armies, engaging the Bulgarian *2nd Army* some 30 miles west of the Vardar, defeated it, scattered the remnants, and turned the remainder of the line towards the east. It was to clinch this victory, and to pin the Bulgar forces there, that on the 18th the British and Greeks launched their now historic Doiran attack.

The reader is already familiar with the nature of those formidable hill positions stepping up, terrace by terrace, to the dominating Grand Couronné and " Pip " Ridge over 2,000 feet high. The defences had been even further strengthened, since the tragic and futile 1917 attack, with reinforced concrete dug-outs, machine-gun emplacements, and concrete casemates for batteries, so placed that they could fire point-blank at assaulting troops.

The defenders included the pick of the Bulgar Army, the *9th (Plevna) Division*, and were under a skilled leader, General Nerezov. Prior to the attack, we had to maintain intense artillery activity to prevent the enemy from sending guns to the west to meet the Franco-Serbian advance; and this made things unpleasantly hot for all our troops in the Doiran area.

Lieut.-General Sir H. F. M. Wilson commanded the XII Corps' attack. His object was to gain the high ridges referred to and exploit the success in every possible way. Besides the 22nd and Greek Seres divisions, he had the 83rd Brigade, less two battalions, and the 2nd *bis* Regiment of Zouaves.

His artillery numbered 230 pieces, including the Greeks': 20 mountain guns, 94 18-pounders, 35 4·5-inch howitzers, 36 60-pounders, 36 6-inch howitzers, four 8-inch howitzers, three 6-inch guns, and two 19-cm. guns of the French armoured train; other British guns west towards the Vardar would assist. The Bulgar *9th Division* had 123 pieces.



Specially drawn.

THE DOIRAN FRONT

A map of this grim region is essential if the reader is to follow the accompanying narrative of the final campaign. Though the British nicknames of the minor features are not shown here, every feature of conspicuous military importance is marked, with the exception of the various " P " or " Pip " ridges, whose whereabouts, however, between Petit Couronné and Grand Couronné (left of the lake) may be readily ascertained by a reference to the photograph on pages 1286-7. The line of dots and dashes represents the Græco-Serbian frontier, Serbia occupying the smaller area.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DERELICTION IN ACHICOURT

Achicourt is in reality a part of Arras, being situated—when the two were separate—less than a kilometre from the citadel at the south-eastern fringe of the main town. The road which runs through here is the same as that serving Monchy-au-Bois—in other words, the Arras—Acheux—Amiens route. A cross-road, also traversing Achicourt, links the latter with Dainville and Beaurains, to the west and east respectively. The above photograph is dated June 30th, 1917.

Artillery preparation was to be confined to two days' wire-cutting, so as not to put the enemy unduly on his guard; a creeping barrage of 18-pounders covering the assault, while two flights of No. 47 Squadron R.A.F. co-operated by observing for the artillery and bombing the Bulgar rear.

Sickness Still Rampant

At the outset we were hampered by sickness, for early in September there had been a serious outbreak of "Spanish 'flu" in the 65th Brigade. By the 7th, it was apparent that this unit could not take part in the attack, and it was replaced by the 77th Brigade, 26th Division. The epidemic spread to the XII Corps General Staff, and during the preparations the senior staff officer had to be changed no fewer than four times. All the battalions were thinned by malaria—450, all ranks, being the average muster.

General Milne decided that, if the attacks should meet with success, the two corps were to aim at joining north of Lake Doiran in the neighbourhood of Hasanli; the XII was then to press on to Strumnitza, while the XVI cleared the Belashitza heights north-east of the lake.

Dawn of the 18th heralded a fine day, which would be insufferably hot when the sun got well up. Again this sinister Doiran Front flamed into battle. Every ravine was a waiting mortuary, every mound an exposed death-trap. The rocky labyrinth intensified tenfold the clangour of bursting shells and mortars. It was a desolate, shell-scarred hinterland, seemingly made for war and for nothing else.

Crops could not grow there—only patches of prickly oak-scrub. In peacetime it served for grazing a few sheep and cattle—and even the herdsmen in their long black sheepskin cloaks usually carried guns as a protection against bandits. In France men were fighting for fields and towns they may have known in other days, and which at any rate were akin to those at home; but here they fought for a gloomy fortress of barren hills that they hated. Nor was one much disposed to notice compensating beauties; these hills were Golgothas flanked by many a Valley of Shadow.

A few minutes after 5 a.m., the Greeks went over with reckless dash—it was their first serious engagement—and overran the first line between Petit Couronné and the lake. By 6 o'clock the 1st Regt. on the right had Doiran and Teton Hills: an hour later,

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after a stubborn fight, Hill 340 was taken by the 2nd Regt.

The 1st pushed on to another hump called the Orb, and carried it. Then the old *leitmotif* of the Doiran " devil's symphony " entered once more ; failure on the left compelled them to fall back in face of heavy counter-attacks. It was ever thus : a successful attack, spoilt by a flank failure !

22nd Division's Advance

The 22nd Division, commanded by Major-General Duncan, advanced in three columns, each equal to an infantry brigade : on the right the 67th Brigade, in the centre the 3rd Greek Regt., on the left the 66th Brigade. Everything went promisingly at first. A company of the 11th Royal Welch Fusiliers entered 0.6 work, beat off two counter-attacks, and established contact with the Greeks on their right. A second company entered a work at the west corner, but at heavy cost, every officer and N.C.O. being knocked out.

A private—Roberts by name—gallantly collected the remnants and led them forward to try their luck at the Hilt. The remains of the other two companies, unfortunately, were already retiring from it, having passed through the wire and run into a pocket of our own gas, which compelled them to don respirators before attacking the position. It was stoutly defended, and only a few of our men reached the trenches.

In the centre, the 11th Welch Regt. captured the Fang, and reached the Knot and the Tassel ; but few men, alas ! survived, and these few were driven out. The 7th South Wales Borderers crossed the Sugar Loaf and the Tongue with comparatively slight loss, then advanced up the Feather through dense smoke, which evidently hid them from the enemy.

All these positions with brief names were steps up to the main one, or " keep "—Grand Couronné. The Borderers, advancing up the slope of the bowl in the teeth of peril more concentrated at every additional yard, actually assaulted the defences of Grand Couronné at an approach called the Rockies. But here the smoke no longer screened them ; isolated, " in the air," they were ripped by machine-gun fire from three sides, and cut to bits.

The few survivors had to abandon their wounded. Among the latter was their commander, Lieut.-Col. Daniel Burges, thrice wounded in leading his men, and

Photo : G. T. Watson

A GREAT IMPROVEMENT

There can be no doubt that in several instances the annihilation wrought by the War has been made the occasion for remodelling a town or village on a far more attractive pattern than its predecessor. A fine example of this is Achicourt, whose new form is so immense an improvement upon its old that one finds the identification of this scene with the one on the opposite page no easy matter. The stream called the Crinchon runs through the western or lower end of the suburb.

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subsequently awarded the V.C. This was a great effort by the Welshmen—literally in " the jaws of death."

The 3rd Greek Regt. also overran the Sugar Loaf and Tongue, then went on to the Maze. A few Greeks succeeded in penetrating the Bulgar third line at the Feather and the Warren—both strongly fortified works on the defences of Grand Couronné—but were driven out by enfilading fire.

The Bulgars Counter-attack

At 10 a.m., the Bulgars counter-attacked and recaptured the Tongue. The Sugar Loaf was held for some hours, then abandoned in the afternoon. It was impossible to hold any of these points for long unless the whole attacking front prospered equally. The Bulgar, on his higher ground, could concentrate fire on them from two or three sides.

Next on the left, the 66th Brigade attacked the " Pip " ridge. The 12th Cheshires were late in capturing the first defence, P.4½, and lost the creeping barrage, which made further substantial progress hopeless. There was fierce fighting on the slopes of P.4, the next defence, but it was reached only momentarily, and all who entered it were annihilated by cross-fire. Lieut.-Col. the Hon. A. R. Clegg-Hill, the C.O., was killed, and his battalion virtually swept into the Roll of Honour.

The 9th South Lancs, following, were stopped by frontal fire from P.4 and flank fire from little Dolina, and lost two-thirds of their men, their C.O.—Lieut.-Col. B. F. Bishop—among them.

The third wave, consisting of the 8th K.S.L.I., came under trench-mortar and machine-gun fire around P.4½, and found the ridge ahead so congested with men that it could not go through. After losing one-third of its strength, it was withdrawn and reorganised in disused British trenches in Jackson ravine, a gully of grim repute. The Bulgars counter-attacked P.4½ and the Tongue, and the remnants of the three battalions were finally closed up by Lieut.-Col. Erskine in this ravine.

Thus, while the first and intermediate positions from Doiran Hill to 380 had been captured by the Greek Seres Division, only one—0.6—had ultimately fallen to the 22nd, which had had a much more difficult task. The Greeks took 683 prisoners—a proper " mop-up "—the 22nd, only 94, as small compensation for heavy losses.

Three battalions of the 67th Brigade were practically wiped out. The 11th Royal Welch Fusiliers came out with only 3 officers and 100 other ranks unwounded; the 11th Welch with its C.O. and 40 other ranks, mostly signallers and runners; the 7th S.W.B. with one officer, slightly wounded, and 55 other ranks, 30 of them gassed. The 3rd Seres Regt., attached, suffered 1,232 casualties; the 66th Brigade 857—the Cheshires and South Lancs having been badly cut up, and the K.S.L.I. thinned by 166.

Cold Comfort

General Wilson was not in favour of a further attack with reserves that day, because of the difficulty of assembling troops. At 5 p.m., the cheery news came through that the attack would be renewed on the morrow, in order that the utmost might be made of the break-through by the French and Serbs on the left beyond the Vardar.

The " forlorn hopes " might snatch what respite they could under the insistent shelling, count the gaps in their ranks, and ponder this good " butty " and that, whom they would never see again, whom friends and relatives in

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MORE RUINS AT ACHICOURT

Taken on the same date as the previous War photograph, this picture shows the wrecked church and the Communal Cemetery in what was then the " village " of Achicourt. Nowadays, in addition to the same cemetery restored, there is within the commune a British burial-ground, begun in March, 1917, and used during March—June, 1917, and August—September, 1918. Here 78 United Kingdom, 52 Canadian, and 1 unidentified fallen lie interred.

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Blighty would never see again either.

Doiran. . . . Ill-fated Doiran. . . . *Bloody* Doiran. . . . Why did we ever set eyes on the infernal place? We vowed that, if we came out of it alive, we'd consign it to hell for all time. That's where it belonged. . . .

On the left of the main attack a company of 8th D.C.L.I., 26th Division, captured Flatiron Hill, and a company of 12th Hampshires got a footing on White Scar Hill. This was intended as a diversion, and the Bulgars made sure that it should become nothing more. After dealing successfully with the main attack, they switched their fire on to these positions, and knocked our men off them with 112 casualties.

The XVI Corps attack on the right of Lake Doiran, against various spurs of the Belashitza range, was launched across more than four miles of exposed plain, partly wooded and seamed by streams. Descent from the Krusha foothills was mostly by mule-tracks, only one narrow, steep, winding road leading from Karamudli railhead to the plain.

Two regiments of the Cretan Division led—the third, with IV Highland Mountain Brigade, R.G.A., attached,

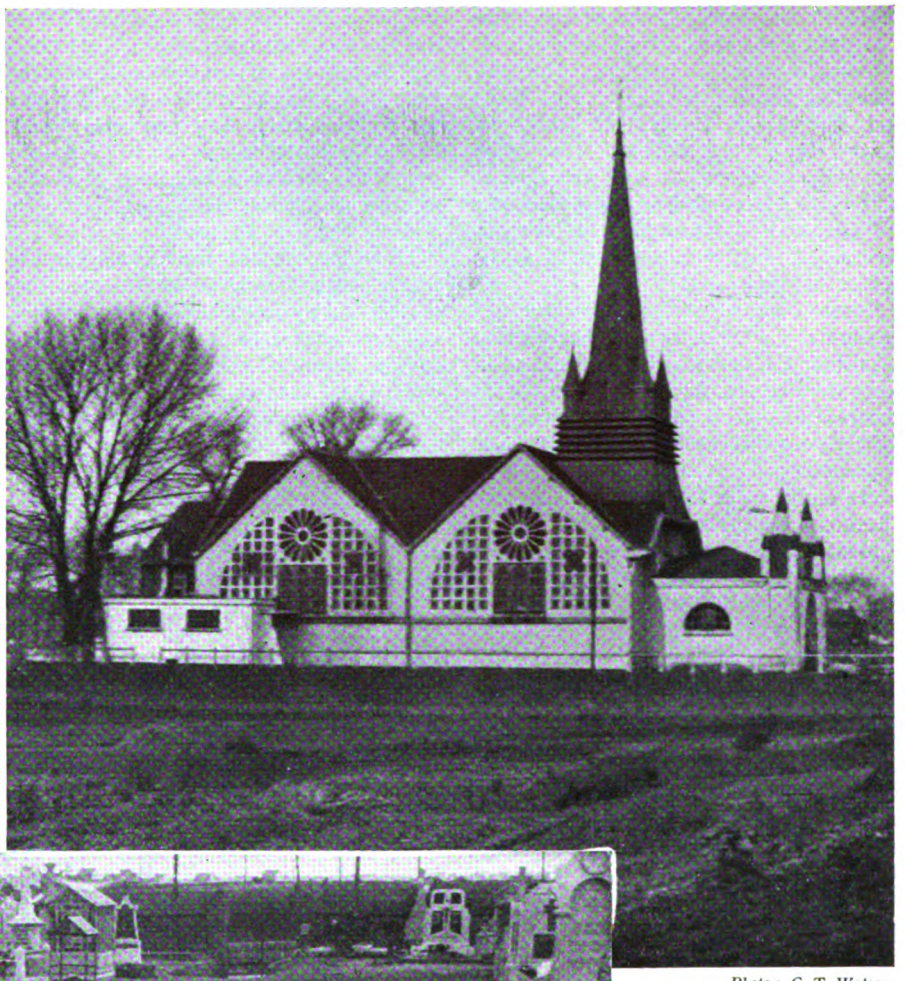

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ACHICOURT'S NEW CHURCH

This spacious and modernistic building is not upon the site of the old church, but stands some distance away, in the newer and residential region of the suburb. As the photograph shows, it is at present by no means hemmed in by buildings, and its peculiar windows are seen to full advantage.

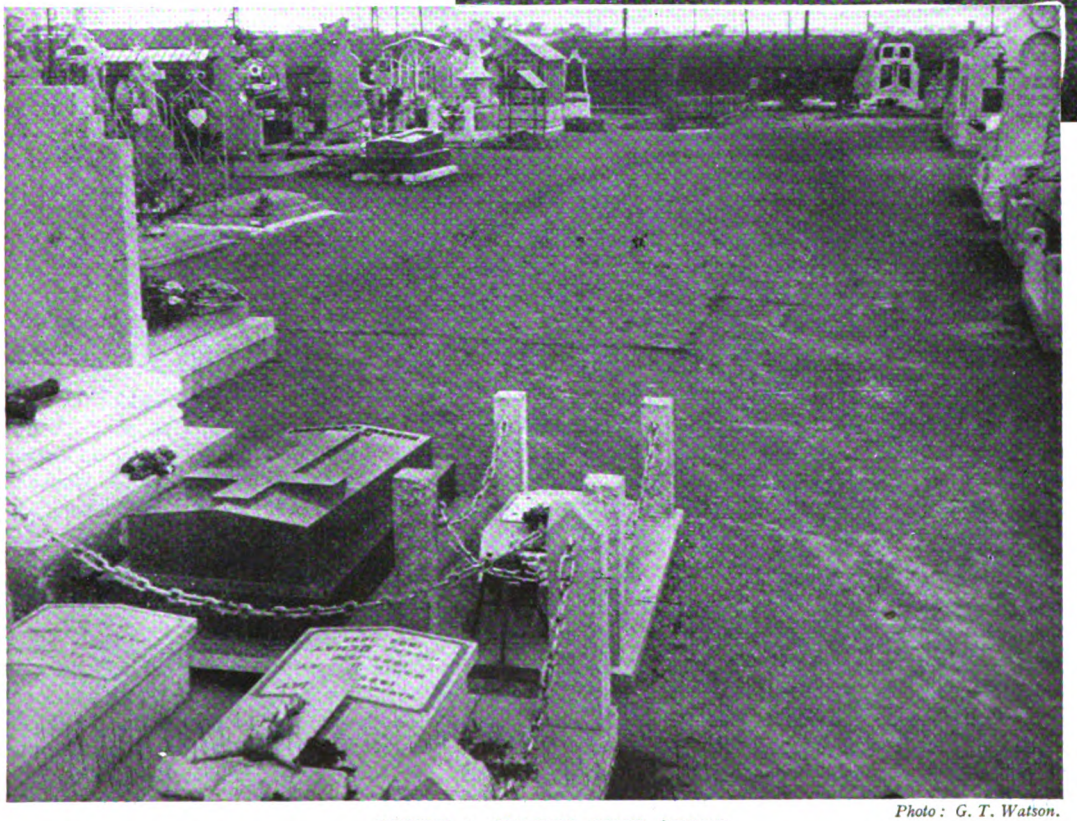

Photo: G. T. Watson.

WHERE A CHURCH ONCE STOOD

This illustration furnishes a good example of the type of alteration which in so many instances bewilders the soldier-pilgrim in search of old haunts—not to mention the photographer seeking to identify the site of a photograph! The tombstones in the picture are those of the Communal Cemetery seen in the war-time view opposite, but where Achicourt Church used to stand there is now nothing but a clear space amid the graves. This is the sole vestige of the old building.

being in reserve north of Brest—while the 84th Brigade, with the III Mountain Brigade, protected the Greek right, and the 85th Brigade, with one mountain battery and the 23rd Welch (Pioneers), were in corps reserve, together with cavalry, on the east shore of the lake.

Anglo-Greek Attack Begins

The Greeks went forward cautiously in

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the dark and early hours of the 18th, and at 5 a.m. the 84th Brigade set out across the plain in echelon, the 2nd Cheshires leading, while the 2nd Buffs and 2nd East Surreys of the 85th moved up to the railway. The start was propitious, for at 5.32 the Greeks sent up a rocket signal to indicate that the enemy had abandoned his outpost positions among the woods and orchards in the Akinjali area.

Some of the supporting batteries, unfortunately, were delayed in negotiating the difficult Krusha foothills, and had to cross the plain in daylight under direct observation. The 62nd Battery of the III Brigade was shelled so heavily while approaching Akinjali that it had to take cover under trees for a time. The 2nd Cheshires were also shelled heavily in Kodzakoria Wood. The advancing Greeks generally lost touch with the British, and their communications with the artillery were faulty.

The Greek's first attack opened between 7.30 and 8 a.m. They breached the enemy line at one point, but could not hold on, and rather lost their nerve. To cover their right, the Cheshires at 1 p.m. advanced to Dervishli. Then an unforeseen thing happened. As the second attack was about to be launched, enemy shells set fire to long grass in front of the 9th Greek Regt., scorching and choking the foremost companies.

Only the 29th Regt. was able to make headway: it crossed the trenches and advanced up the slope, but was forced back by flanking fire. The Greeks were so occupied with the immediate job in hand that the British knew little or nothing of what was happening to them for several hours. In the evening there was a general withdrawal, the 85th Brigade holding the outposts in Akinjali Wood and village, and the 1st Welch maintaining touch with them from Chakli.

All that day the enemy made the most of his "top-storey windows" on the mountain summits, and pitched shells incessantly on to the plain below, where infantry and artillery searched frantically for meagre shelter. The divisional artillery lost 100 horses; the Cretan casualties amounted to 800, many Greeks perishing in the grass fire. On the 20th this division was taken back to rest. Whatever it possessed in dash, in organisation it had shown lack of control and experience; and the artillery delays in the foothills had made things worse. This attack, too, was a failure.

Battered Britons

For the renewed assault on the Doiran positions on the 19th, two regiments of the Seres Division were again available, but the third regiment and our own 66th and 67th Brigades had been so broken up that they were fit only to hold the line for other advancing troops. Thus, Major-General Duncan was left with the 77th Brigade (26th Division), a weakened 65th (22nd Division), and the 2nd *bis* Regt. of Zouaves.

He resolved that the attack on the "Pip" ridge should be carried this time only to P.4 by one of the 65th battalions, the remainder to be in reserve in Jackson ravine twenty minutes after zero; while the Zouaves should make for the Warren trenches in the Bulgar third line, then turn west up the steep ridge to attack P.3 and other works behind P.4. On the right the 77th Brigade were to assault in turn those death-traps of the previous day, Sugar Loaf, Knot, Tassel, Rockies, and Plume.

On the right of them, the Seres Division carried the Hilt at a second assault, also the Orb; again small parties were seen struggling up the slope of Grand Couronné, and again flanking fire stopped them. After hand-to-hand fighting of the bloodiest kind, which was breathtaking to watch, the Bulgars retook the Hilt; and by 10 a.m. the two Greek regiments, frantic from the fight, were back behind Doiran Hill and 340, held by the 2nd King's Own.

The temperamental Zouaves, assembling for their attack on the Warren, caused a disastrous hitch at the outset. Companies of the 12th Argyll and Sutherland, forging up to their position of assembly in Vladaya ravine, found the Zouaves completely blocking the path through Doljeli, and had to scramble over them with many a lusty Highland curse—answered by a corresponding Gallic one, for the nerves of both were at straining-point.

General Duncan had suggested to the Zouave commander that, to avoid congestion, he move one of his battalions by the Volovec track, the other by a bridle path west of it; and provided both columns with a British officer and N.C.O.'s as guides.

Failure of the Zouaves

One battalion was 25 minutes late in starting. Crossing Doljeli ravine, it ran into the main column and came under heavy artillery fire, which caused over 50 casualties. In a panic, the battalion then ran for cover in Doljeli village and communication-trenches and orchards adjoining.

Its commander was wounded; and his successor declined to advance in column until the shelling of Jackson, ahead, ceased. He thought his men had been observed and marked down by the enemy, though this was not true, for the barrage was merely a random one in the dark. Altogether, it was a bad case of having the "wind up," which seriously hampered our own troops at a most critical juncture. Only a handful of Zouaves reached Jackson, their place of assembly; and even these *never took part in the attack.*

Our 77th Brigade troops, however, pushed on to their assembly positions. In Vladaya and Jackson ravines, Argylls and Scottish Rifles encountered pockets of our gas, thought it was only smoke and fumes, delayed the putting on of respirators, and suffered accordingly. General Duncan had to order the brigade-commander not to go beyond the Tongue if the Argylls found themselves unsupported by the French on their left; but apparently the message did not arrive.

The 11th Scottish Rifles went ahead, captured the Fang trenches, but could not penetrate through the deadly flanking fire from the Hilt on the right, which the Greeks had not yet taken. The Scotsmen held the Tongue for a short time, secured a trench between there and the Tassel, then had to fall back and join the two other battalions on the Tongue. The 8th Royal Scots Fusiliers had lost heavily crossing the Sugar Loaf under intense fire, and the 12th Argylls, who had made desperate efforts to advance beyond it, could not do so because the defection of the Zouaves had left their flank uncovered.

A Desperate Affray

These three battalions on the Tongue, under Lieut.-Col. Stewart, were an isolated target for artillery, trench mortars, and machine guns in adjoining works. After the Greeks on the right had lost the Hilt, both flanks were "in the air." Three bitter counter-attacks had to be beaten off. In the third, desperate Scottish Riflemen, with no ammunition left, hurled captured stick-grenades, and even boulders, at the Bulgars, then drove into them with the bayonet and held them off.

At about 10.30 a.m. their C.O. ordered a withdrawal, for the foe were swarming round the flanks, he could not get up enough ammunition, and if he remained where he was every man would be either captured or killed. In the retirement the Argylls, forming the rear, were charged by Bulgars who emerged from the smoke-pall. Fighting hand-to-hand, the majority of Scots just managed to get clear, leaving

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Specially drawn.

BADGES—SERIES NINE

The following badges are illustrated, in the order left to right, beginning at the top row: (1) The York and Lancaster Regiment. (2) The Durham Light Infantry. (3) The Highland Light Infantry. (4) The Seaforth Highlanders. (5) The Gordon Highlanders. (6) The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. (7) The Royal Irish Rifles. (8) Princess Victoria's (The Royal Irish Fusiliers). (9) The Connaught Rangers. (10) Princess Louise's (The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders). (11) The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment. (12) The Royal Munster Fusiliers. (13) The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. (14) The Rifle Brigade. (15) The Army Cyclist Corps. (16) The Machine Gun Corps. (17) The Royal Tank Corps. (18) 2nd Battalion, the Hampshire Regiment. (19) The Monmouthshire Regiment. (20) The Cambridgeshire Regiment.

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a number behind as prisoners. The Colonel, gallant and resourceful to the last, fell mortally wounded.

In that grimmest of fights against hopeless odds, the Fusiliers lost 358, the Argylls 299 (out of 517), and the Scottish Rifles 228. The French Croix de Guerre was bestowed on the Argyll and Sutherland battalion for its bravery—a rare distinction shared by the 2/12th Cheshires and 7th South Wales Borderers for the attack of the previous day; but it was poor compensation for the lack of Zouave support on the left, which had cost us a goodly number of lives.

The 9th King's Own (Royal Lancaster) Battalion, assaulting P.4½ and P.4 on the "Pip" ridge, to the left, suffered under the same bombardment as the Zouaves near Doljeli village, the C.O., Lieut.-Col. Jackson, falling wounded; but it pushed on under Captain Whitehead. With 35 minutes to spare, General Duncan sent a message, by six different runners, stopping the advance while the barrage went on. Not one reached his goal in the darkness, shelling, and confusion.

The King's Own waited only two minutes after the agreed time, 5.35, then went through and captured P.4½, though the British barrage did not lift. Pressing on to P.4, under raking artillery and machine-gun fire from Grand Couronné, they drove the defenders down with Lewis guns. Then they came up against the British barrage.

Needless Sacrifice

Twice they tried to go through it, but our own 8-in. howitzers smashed them. A party of 10 reached an advanced work which was not under the barrage, the rest lying down and taking shots at the enemy. To inspire his men, Captain Whitehead, although wounded, stood up and also took shots with a rifle. When our barrage did lift, the battalion was too weak to advance farther against the machine-gun chatter. The captain, wounded a second time, ordered the remnant to retire; and in doing so through a barrage it suffered further losses, bringing the total to 233. Twenty minutes after reaching the assembly trenches again at 6.15, it received General Duncan's message!

Another delayed message figured in that tragic morning of fiascos. Receiving from an artillery officer at 5.46 a.m. an incorrect report that the leading Zouave battalion was advancing, General Duncan issued orders for a British battalion to support it in its attack on the Warren. The brigadier's relay, sent at 6.30, did not reach the 9th East Lancs until 7.20, by which time the C.O. knew that the French were in disorder some distance in the rear.

Nevertheless, he led his battalion forward from Jackson, encountered uncut wire in front of the Corne copse, and could not pass. Lieut.-Col. Campbell, himself four times wounded, then withdrew his battalion, with 118 casualties—yet another indirect result of that tragic Zouave failure.

So again the attack had everywhere failed. That night the 65th and 77th Brigades were withdrawn and the 3rd Seres Regt. returned to its own command, the 66th and 67th Brigades remaining in the line to take retaliatory punishment from the Bulgar mortars and guns.

The two days' losses of the 22nd Division, plus the 77th Brigade and part of the 83rd, were 165 officers and 3,155 other ranks. As the Official Historian remarks, these were crushing figures in view of our depleted strength—rare in any previous attack known to history.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN A BALKAN TRENCH

A characteristic scene in a British trench on the Macedonian Front during the four years of fighting, and waiting to fight, in this, the grimmest of all the Great War "sideshows." No slight is intended, by the superlative, on the great achievements and feats of endurance in Palestine, "Mespot," and East Africa; but in none of the minor theatres, save in Gallipoli, did climate, fierce opposition, and total absence of any visible success, combine to try so severely the spirit and body of the British Tommy, as in the region loosely termed "Salonica."

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON A BALKAN BEACH

Scottish troops on the beach at Stavros during the Macedonian campaign. This place stands on the western side of the Gulf of Rendina, 40 miles due east of Salonica, and is connected with the Salonica—Doiran railway by a branch-line which skirts the southern shore of the lakes behind Stavros.

PRACTISING AN ATTACK

It does not look much like an attack, even a practice one; but that is because the photographer has chosen a moment when the Scottish troops in question were resting under partial cover. The fighting of the last year in Salonica was, perhaps, more intense than it had been.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

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Enormous Casualties

More than one battalion lost over 70 per cent.—a hellish slaughter. Altogether, the XII Corps lost 176 officers, 3,313 other ranks; the Greek Seres Division, 173 officers, 2,578 other ranks; and the Cretan Division, 44 officers, 73 other ranks. The total Allied losses, not counting those among the Zouaves, were 394 officers and 6,709 other ranks, of whom over 500 were prisoners; while those of the enemy in this area, from the 16th to the 19th, amounted to 83 officers, 2,643 other ranks—probably rising to 3,000 if one includes casualties inflicted by the XVI Corps on the other side of the lake.

All that we had been able to do was to tie down the Doiran force while the continued Franco-Serbian advance menaced the Bulgar communications on the Vardar. There were men, sadly "wise after the event," who believed that this might have been achieved merely by intense and continuous bombardment, with the troops standing to but not going over. But in war there must always be wastage of life, with schemes ill-conceived and others that "gang agley." Doiran, for the British who fought there, was indeed a Calvary.

On the evening of the 19th, a silence of exhaustion descended on it like a benediction: a silence in which one heard, as sometimes during momentary lulls in the actual fighting, the croaking of frogs in the lakeside reeds; in which one might hear, too, some shell-numbed fellow who had come through the storm of steel crying like a helpless child which had lost its way in the dark. . . . It is in the ebb of an attack, when the stars regain the heavens and familiar odours teem in the night, that men remember and suffer, and are not ashamed of showing it.

And then, after seeming defeat—triumphant, incredible victory! Away on the left, Bulgar resistance to the French and Serbs crumpled. By the morning of the 21st, loud explosions behind the enemy indicated that he was blowing up dumps. R.A.F. observers reported a general retirement on both banks of the Vardar, and in the afternoon bombed, with paralysing effect, retreating columns making for Kosturino, raking panic-stricken troops and transport from an altitude of only 50 feet.

The Bulgars "Pack Up"

On the XII and XVI Corps fronts, reliefs were in progress when orders came to follow up the enemy and convert the retirement into a rout. The 26th Division was ordered to occupy the Machukovo salient by the Vardar. The cavalry—Derbyshire Yeomanry and

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A NOVEL CANTEEN

Heavily camouflaged with boughs from possible aerial observation, this canteen looks as picturesque as an old ruin; and in truth the building is old, for it is none other than a disused monastery, not far from the front line, which the British military authorities have appropriated to their very secular uses. The scene is laid not far from Stavros, which was nearest to the extreme right of the Allied line.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ABOVE LAKE DOIRAN

An interesting photograph from a topographical point of view, for it shows an expanse of some of the most important country on the Doiran front. The sharp peak almost in the centre of the picture is Grand Couronné, while in the foreground is the ruined village of Doljeli. The pronounced dip behind Doljeli is Jackson Ravine, between which and Grand Couronné lie the Sugar Loaf, the Tongue, the Tassel, the Sceptre, and the Rockies. On the right come successively the Fang, the Blade, the Knot, and the Hilt. The camera is in the neighbourhood of Pillar Hill.

Lothians and Border Horse—was closed up ready for hot pursuit. Patrols went out on the XII Corps front and found only weak rearguards; the Bulgar Army had packed up and quitted.

Seres troops walked on to Grand Couronné. Our battered 22nd and 26th Divisions advanced over the positions they had fought for at such cost, and saw the enemy in retreat as far as the Belashitza foothills.

The writer, who was following in the wake of this advance, will never forget standing on Grand Couronné and looking back over the "downstairs" positions we had occupied for nearly three years. It seemed a miracle. In one of the Bulgar dug-outs behind the crest, roofed with granite slabs and concrete several feet thick, he picked up a Bulgar letter in beautiful script—evidently a kind of Valentine, partly in verse. He also picked up swarms of fleas, which settled thick on his puttees.

Near by was a gun casemate smashed by a direct hit, the debris reeking of death. This reek, in fact, was everywhere, for all the way up from Doljeli he dead lay about—half kneeling or prone on the slopes; in some ravines, such as Jackson, thick as the fallen sandbags.

A reverent silence came over this section as it marched stolidly up the track through the heart of the Doiran battle-slopes; men looked to right and left with set faces, speaking hardly a word. You looked at something pathetically, grotesquely crumpled; and the "flash" over the stocking told you it had once been a Jock. Near by lay an immense, swollen Bulgar, headless, blackened by the sun.

Then you looked at the sky: fair, blue, serene; and all the rest became at once a diabolical nightmare, something the eye of man should never behold. But all the time there was that stench, which is like no other on earth, for it not only sickens the nostrils, but is shocking to the soul. In the uncanny silence, small, tufted ground-larks cheeped: and once a magpie flashed.

A Week of Torment

The ensuing week was an ordeal of incessant marching and rearguard fighting for men who had already spent themselves in those final attacks. The XII Corps had to clear the Blaga Planina, at the foot of the Belashitzas; and the XVI to secure the high ground at Casandule. Bad roads, heat, general fatigue, and occasional opposition from snipers and mountain batteries slowed down the advance, but the R.A.F. took endless toll of the fleeing columns with bombs and machine guns. The Yeomanry rode hot-hoof through Bogdanci to near Furka, where they came under the fire of a mountain battery, which was captured after a raking by our artillery.

We sent ahead advance guards, with light guns, the columns following. In Rabrovo 50 British were found in hospital. Some of these reunions had their pathetic side. Mr. V. J. Seligman records of our wounded who fell into the hands of the enemy: "Some of them, including a British Infantry Colonel, were left behind by the Bulgar in his retreat, on the reverse slopes of 'Grand Couronné,' and were found by us later in a pitiable condition. They had lain out in the open for more than three days, their wounds uncared for, their only nourishment a little water and

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A VILLAGE THAT HAD ONCE BEEN BEAUTIFUL

There is still a rural charm even amongst the debris of shattered Nurlu. The village lies on the Péronne—Cambrai road, at the point where this is crossed by the route from Manancourt to Liéramont. It is 10 km. north-east of Péronne. There was fighting here on March 19th—20th, 1917, when British cavalry patrols, in quest of the retreating enemy, came into touch with him at this point among others; and on the 20th a cavalry outpost, with infantry in support, was established in the village.

some tomatoes, given them by the Bulgars."

By the night of the 21st we had captured 5,000 prisoners. The depleted 22nd Division had a difficult task, in view of its extreme fatigue. Fifty 8th South Wales Borderers climbed in the dark of the 24th to rush the Bulgar high point on the Belashitzas, Signal Allemand, but were seen by the enemy and forced to return. It was decided to bombard the position at dawn, and to send two columns against it: the 8th South Wales Borderers and 8th King's Own on the right, the 9th E. Lancs, with two machine-gun sections and the Surrey Yeomanry, on the left.

Shortly before noon, the left reported that it had been reduced to 130 men by casualties and losses in the thick scrub, and that it was out of touch with the right. The attack was accordingly cancelled; but the right column had been entirely swallowed by the scrub, and there was no news of it until nightfall. Finding the enemy artillery registering on the track running to the foot of the spur, Lieutenant-Colonel Dobbs had led his men through the rough instead. He reached the peak before nightfall, but could not attack alone.

The Last Skirmish

At 8 p.m. the enemy bombed his outposts, yet he remained in this perilous position, constantly harassed by the Bulgars, throughout the night and following day. When the Zouaves ultimately captured the Signal, in a 28th Division attack on the Belashitzas in a shade-heat of 95 degrees, his detachment had been there 48 hours.

Before the advance of the XVI Corps on Strumnitza on September 26th, a car came from the town flying a white flag on its bonnet. In it were two Bulgarian officers with a letter to General Milne, signed by General Todorov, suing for 48 hours' cessation of fighting, during which delegates would present themselves with proposals for an armistice. Milne sent the communication on to Salonica without comment, and continued the advance.

On the morning of the 27th, after the advance guard of the 26th Division had entered the city, two more cars came through, the rear one with blinds drawn, and drove to the British Advance G.H.Q. at Yanesh. They contained M. Ljapchev, Bulgarian Minister of Finance, M. Radev, Minister Plenipotentiary, General Lukov, commanding the *2nd Army*, and another officer. General Milne sent them on to Salonica, and proceeded with the job of cutting off the *2nd Army* on the lower Struma.

The Bulgarian Prime Minister, M. Malinov, was suing for an immediate armistice: his former allies were to leave the country at once, and the reconstituted forces would follow the advice of Great Britain; Bulgaria's position would be that of a neutral, if not an ally. On the 30th the armistice was signed, and hostilities ceased from midday.

Apart from casualties, 9,855 sick had been admitted to hospital during the month—5,000 from the 27th and 28th Divisions alone. Only a skeleton army, therefore, was left to celebrate the happy

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release. The troops were too wearied to do more than take it stoically, unemotionally. Travelling light, they had little protection against the vile weather which set in; sometimes rations ran out; at intervals along the roads, where the R.A.F. had bombed and machine-gunned with deadly effect, were dead Bulgars, horses, oxen, smashed carts and lorries—the grim debris of a fleeing army. In one field were nearly 400 corpses.

After Bulgaria—Turkey

The next move was against Turkey. Three British, one French, and three Greek divisions moved toward the frontier. Of the British, the 26th Division advanced on Radomir, up the Struma, and the 22nd on Dedeagatch, on the Ægean coast, and toward the Maritza river. The Navy transported most of the 22nd from Stavros—and a rough passage it was, through heavy seas in small gunboats—but the transport had to trek by way of Drama, Kavalla, and Xanthi over bad roads in cold, wet weather.

After Turkey, also, had thrown in her hand, the whole division trekked back the same way, taking 15 days, and camping cold each night. For men racked with malaria and battle-ordeal, this was the last straw; many fell sick by the way, and a number died. Only two pleasant memories survive: a production of the play *Anne* in an improvised theatre at Stavros, with Derek Oldham impersonating the heroine most charmingly; and the beauty of the wooded Stavros hills and Rendina Gorge after the bare Doiran front.

Most of the troops had to wait long for demobilisation, owing to shortage of transport. The 22nd Division returned to its old rest-billets around Gugunci, near Doiran, for a time—and revived, in the Rates theatre, *The Chocolate Soldier*. It was a poignant experience, hearing the familiar tunes again; so much had happened in the interim, so many good fellows fallen in the attacks. The whole front, silent now, was haunted by ghosts.

When eventually the troops moved down to Salonica to await embarkation, many who had been continuously up-country without leave sampled its cosmopolitan pleasures for the first time since landing. The White Tower cabaret on the waterfront was a more orderly place now than when the daring dancer Lolotte had played to an audience packed to the doors, while riotous ragging went on between khaki and Poilu-blue, and festive subalterns would hold up the show and give an impromptu turn from the stage!

Floca's, too, and other cafés rebuilt after the Fire, were more sober; but the mechanical pianos still jangled in the Rue Egnatia "dives," haunted by exotic *vivandières* of ten nationalities.

Good-bye to All That . . .

And there was still work to do; drafts were sent to Batoum, Tiflis, and Baku, beyond the Black Sea, to guard the oil-wells there and prevent Bolshevik penetration into Persia. For the rest, not a few, like the writer, staggered on board the transport for Blighty with a malaria temperature of 104—carefully concealed until the ship was under way—and spent the voyage in the sick-bay.

Good-bye to All That. . . . The despised little Salonica Force had broken the first vital link in the enemy chain, and precipitated general peace. Salonica, Doiran, the Vardar, the Struma, would be remembered names in many a British home for years to come.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

UNINSPIRED AND UNINSPIRING

There is nothing beautiful about modern Nuriu, whose reconstruction seems to have proceeded not only more slowly, but less coherently, than that of most battlefield villages. On March 21st, 1918, the 39th Division was placed in VII Corps reserve in the village. It was soon sent up to the front, however, and, as our troops were forced back, Nuriu speedily came into the line: the VII Corps, indeed, being forced back on to it before nightfall on the 22nd. The following day it was relinquished altogether.

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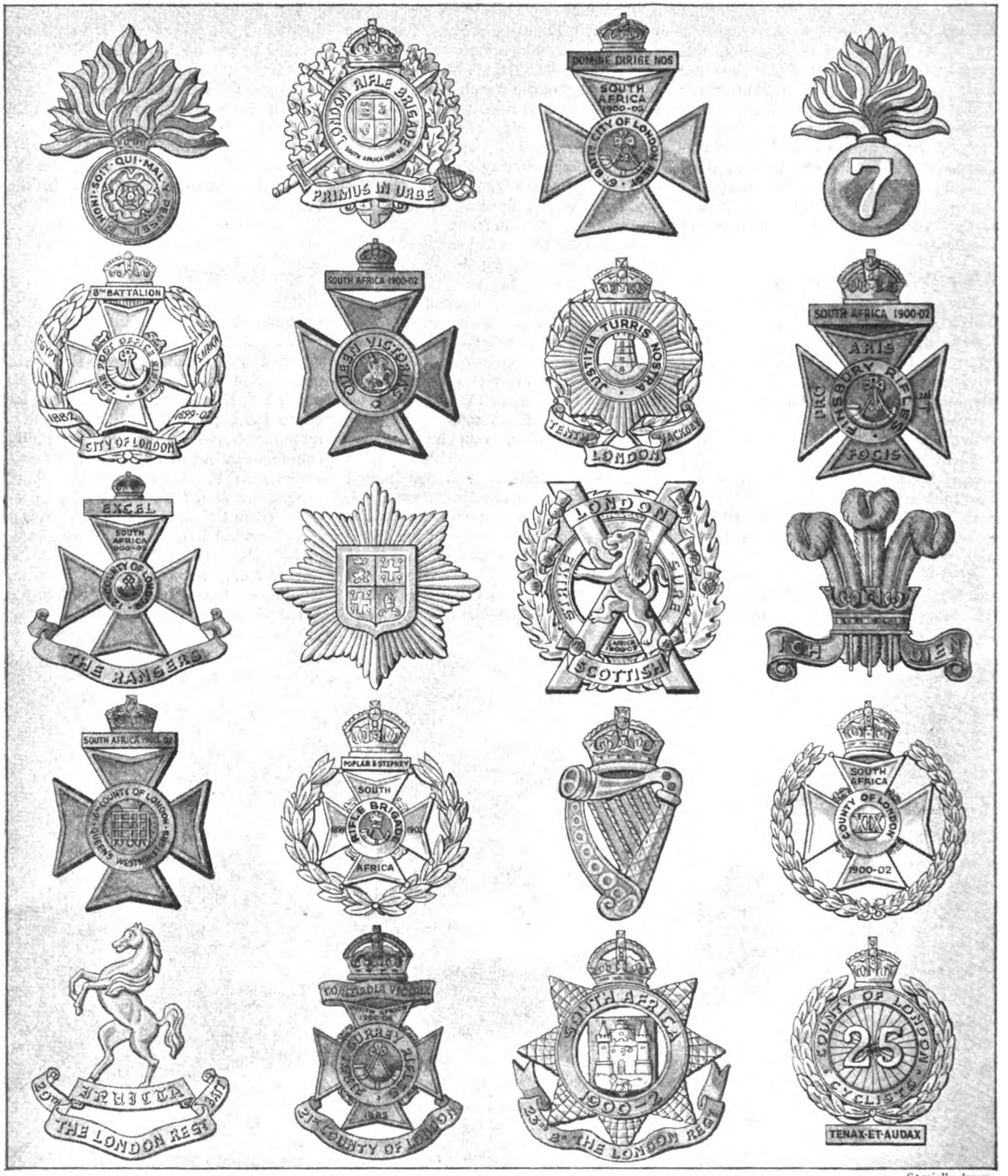

Specially drawn.

BADGES—SELECTION TEN

As all the badges on this sheet belong to the London Regiment, for the sake of conciseness the name will be omitted after the ordinal figures. From left to right, starting at the top, the page shows: 1—1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th (Royal Fusiliers). 2—5th (London Rifle Brigade). 3—6th (Rifles). 4—7th ("Shiny Seventh"). 5—8th (Post Office Rifles). 6—9th (Queen Victoria's Rifles). 7—10th (Hackney). 8—11th (Finsbury Rifles). 9—12th (Rangers). 10—13th (Kensingtons). 11—14th (London Scottish). 12—15th (Civil Service Rifles). 13—16th (Queen's Westminsters). 14—17th (Tower Hamlet Rifles). 15—18th (London Irish Rifles). 16—19th (St. Pancras). 17—20th (Blackheath and Woolwich). 18—21st (1st Surrey Rifles). 19—23rd (Clapham Junction). 20—25th (Cyclists). The 22nd and 24th London Regt. wore the badge of the Royal West Surrey Regt., and the 26th and 27th that of the Royal Fusiliers.

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CHAPTER LXXIX

THE BATTLE OF THE LYS

The Battle of the Lys which opened on April 9th, 1918, was Ludendorff's second attempt in that year to break the British line. Like the attack on the Somme a few weeks earlier, the new Flanders battle was in the nature of a gambler's throw. The sands were running out, and it was becoming clear to the German leaders that unless a decisive success could be achieved, and that without delay, the end was in sight. As will be apparent from the following chapter, the fighting qualities of the sorely-tried British and Imperial divisions were mainly responsible for the dissipation of Ludendorff's hopes, and it is open to doubt whether the German troops ever again fought with their old élan.

EARLY in April, Ludendorff transferred some of his reserves and a large number of guns northward, and, on the 9th of that month, opened a fresh offensive.

A Very Thin Line

Again he struck where the front was weak. Between La Bassée Canal and the Ypres—Comines Canal, the Allies were holding with 7 divisions a front of 40,000 yards; that is, the troops were spread even more thinly over the ground than Gough's divisions had been in March. From right to left the divisions were: the 55th, 2nd Portuguese, 40th, 34th, 25th, 19th, and 9th.

On the 7th, in order to protect the right flank of their opening stroke, the Germans smothered Armentières with gas. On the 9th, they advanced with 14 divisions (8 in front line and 6 in second line) against the 40th, Portuguese, and 55th divisions. They deployed their main strength against the Portuguese, and having swept them away, tried to roll up the divisions on either flank.

Against the 55th, the only British division in the area which had not been engaged in the Somme battle, they failed completely. Jeudwine—the commander—threw back his left flank, and maintained an unshakable front throughout the battle. Against the 40th, favoured by a thick mist, they achieved considerable success. Within a few hours of the start they had opened a gap of 15,000 yards, and were pouring through it.

The 51st and 50th Divisions, which had just absorbed thousands of fresh drafts into their sadly-depleted ranks, moved forward to the Lawe and Lys rivers to take up a prepared line of defence; but so swift was the advance of the Germans, and so embarrassing the flight of the Portuguese and of refugees, that they came into action piecemeal, and were at once drawn into a ding-dong struggle at close quarters, in which the assailants, owing to their superior numbers, were bound eventually to prevail.

At daylight on the 10th, the Germans launched a second attack, on this occasion with five divisions. It struck the front of the 19th, 25th and 9th Divisions, and again broke through the line. Famous and hallowed ground—"Plugstreet," "Plugstreet" Wood, Messines—was lost, and the 34th Division, pinched between the two assaults, narrowly escaped capture. Fortunately, just as our right flank held, so did our left. The 9th Division, in spite of having lost 5,000 men in the Somme battle, proved its quality once more.

To Within 5 miles of Hazebrouck

Between the two walls to north and south, the hostile thrust, with its direct threat to the Channel ports, progressed until it was within five miles of Hazebrouck. On April 12th, so grave was the situation that Haig, the least emotional of men, published his famous appeal: "There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man. There must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end."

On the following day, reserves began to arrive from the south, and the lower half of the breach was closed. In the centre Bailleul was lost, and in the north the Ypres Salient was abandoned for a line just in front of the town.

On the 18th, the battle died down, and French divisions, long demanded by Haig, took over part of the line. On the 25th, the Germans drove a French garrison off Kemmel, and then stood in a dominating position for the continuation of their enterprise. But somehow Ludendorff's heart failed at the critical moment. He did not pursue his advantage, and, after further attacks on the 26th and 29th, which resulted in failure, the battle ended.

The German onslaught had been clearly foreshadowed. For the need to correlate its effects with those of the thrust towards Amiens demanded quick and continuous movements which could not be concealed or disguised. Numerous and definite air-reports had given indication of its location and strength. G.H.Q., however, seem to have been convinced that a repetition or a short extension of the recent stroke at Arras was intended and, consequently, they neglected the thinly-held ground further north.

The Germans were lucky in their choice of time; for the 2nd Portuguese Division, strengthened by part of the 1st Division, had just taken over the front of the latter as well as its own, and was on the point of being relieved by two British divisions. The enemy's tactics were distinctly clever. By striking heavily against the weakest point, he anticipated, and was successful in effecting, a deep penetration which enabled him not only to outflank, but also to get in rear of, the 40th Division.

Between the Portuguese and the 51st Division, which was resting and reorganising, there was only the thin protection of King Edward's Horse and the 11th Cyclists' Battalion. These two units, however, made a magnificent resistance, and, at the cost of half their effectives, enabled the division to reach the river Lawe.

The Battered 51st

The 51st (Highland) Division, with a fighting reputation second to none, had received perhaps a harder hammering than any other in the Somme battle. Yet now, although short of officers and N.C.O.'s, and composed mainly of young drafts, it was again to add to its tale of honour.

Its leading troops reached the western bank of the Lawe in the early afternoon. The 5th Seaforths reinforced the K.E.H. and enabled the latter to hold on for another three hours before withdrawing

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across the river. A detachment of the K.E.H. holding a bridge-head at Vieille Chapelle was reinforced by a company of the 6th Gordon Highlanders under Captain J. R. Christie; and this small party succeeded in defending the crossing for two days and two nights against violent bombardments and repeated assaults.

Early on the 11th, determined not to surrender, they decided to break out. They were met by a storm of small-arm fire. Six men, one after the other, attempted to rush a particular machine gun which was barring their escape, and each was shot dead. Captain Christie, wounded in the knee, crawled forward with the same intention. He was hit again, and his right arm shattered. The enemy then entered the village and "captured the remnants of the garrison —a handful of wounded men." This was a feat worthy to rank with the most glorious of the War.

The 40th Division, on the left of the Portuguese, was gravely embarrassed by the sudden retreat of the latter. Moreover, the similarity in colour of the German and Portuguese uniforms made it difficult to distinguish friend from foe in the early-morning mist. Consequently, hostile troops were able to move round our flanks and rear with an almost complete immunity from fire.

Many units were enveloped and destroyed, and soon the whole division, with the exception of a single battalion, was facing to a flank. Only the 13th Yorkshires remained in the old entrenchments, and there the gallant "Tikes" repelled many an assault during the day. About the centre of the flank, the 12th East Surreys held out doggedly in Fleurbaix for many hours, and retired, eventually, only when ordered to do so by the brigadier.

40th and 50th Divisions

Behind the 40th Division, lying north of the 51st, was the 50th Division. As soon as the Portuguese failure was realised, the 151st Brigade was pushed forward into line with the 11th Cyclists' Battalion, and the two other brigades of the division were moved to the Lawe and the Lys to hold the passages of those rivers as far as Sailly.

On their left, the remnants of the 40th Division were driven out of Bac St. Maur, and, though supported by a brigade of the 34th Division, were thrown back to the north and east. Fortunately, just at dusk, the 74th Brigade, brought up from reserve, arrived and at once counter-attacked. Fighting hard throughout the night, it

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DIGGING IN

Men of the 51st (Highland) Division digging themselves in near Locon on April 10th, 1918. Locon, between Béthune and Vieille Chapelle, had been all but reached in the German break-through of April 9th, and the work here shown in progress was part of a hasty effort to improve the defences of the Hinges ridge (Hinges lies just west of Locon). The bulk of the 51st Division was at this time holding the line along the Lawe river from Locon northward toward Estaires.

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had managed by daylight to wrest the greater part of the village from the enemy, and to restore the situation in that quarter.

The general result of the day's battle was that the British divisions in the area, after expending all their reserves, had managed to hold " a thin line round the great pocket, ten miles wide, five and a half miles deep, which the Germans had made in their front. This new line . . . ran behind the Lawe and the Lys, with flanks connecting it to an unaltered front line on either side." [1]

On the 10th, the Germans launched a fresh assault. It struck the IX Corps north of Armentières, and, forcing back the 19th and 25th Divisions, threatened with capture the 34th, which lay in front of the Lys, covering Armentières. Further south, the original attack was pursued. The 55th (Lancashire) Division resisted as stoutly as before. Such little ground as it lost, it regained at once by counter-attack, in which it had been well practised before the battle. The left of the 51st Division was driven back a mile from the river, and, on the front of the 50th, the enemy managed to establish a bridge-head at Estaires. Craigie-Halkett, with the 74th Brigade, renewed his attacks on Bac St. Maur, but encountered overwhelming strength, and was driven back on Steenwerck.

South of the Lys, the enemy, pressing on, captured Erquinghem. Again the situation was critical. But again help arrived in the nick of time, on this occasion in the shape of the 1/4th Duke of Wellington's. This West Riding battalion, which fought splendidly throughout the whole battle, drove the enemy out of Erquinghem, and, though heavily battered, held it until ordered to retire five hours later.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

LACOUTURE OF ILL-FAME

The ill-fame of Lacouture, or La Couture, lies in its association with the German break-through against the Portuguese on April 9th, 1918. The 1st King Edward's Horse and the 11th Cyclists' Battalion (55th Division) undertook a most gallant defence of this place, Vieille Chapelle, and Huit Maisons, although Lacouture had to be given up before the end of the day. Nowadays, a replica of the war-time ruined church makes an original and effective memorial in front of the new building.

A Well-earned V.C.

Private A. Poulter, of Leeds, won an exceptionally fine V.C. in this fighting. On ten occasions, until himself badly wounded, he carried severely injured men through gun and machine-gun barrages to safer localities, going forward to pick them up in close contact with advancing Germans.

The 34th Division was not attacked on the 9th; but, in the course of that day, its reserve brigade—the 101st—and the supports of its right brigade, were absorbed into the fight in aid of the 40th Division on its right. It was again left alone on the 10th; but early that morning its position had become precarious. On the one side the Germans were at Steenwerck, and on the other they had captured " Plugstreet," only five miles from Steenwerck, from the 25th Division.

Nicholson, commanding, got orders to retire at 10 a.m. His left brigade—the 102nd—did so fairly easily; but the 103rd, in a dangerous salient, had a very difficult task. Eventually, the whole division was assembled north-west of Armentières; but even there it was still in a salient, mixed up with troops belonging to no less than four other divisions.

In the action of the 34th Machine Gun Battalion covering this retirement, we obtain one of those rare but glorious glimpses of the Unknown Soldier to whom the whole world pays its tribute of reverence:

" The Germans were held up in one place by a single machine gun. Try as they would, they could not get on, so deadly was its fire. At last an officer hoisted a white flag and went forward to ask the gun-team to surrender. To his astonishment he found only one man alive. Him he promised the best treatment and all kinds of things to chuck up, but the lad said he would die with his comrades. The German went back,

[1] *Official History*, France and Belgium, 1918, ii, p. 184.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AMMUNITION GOING WEST

An officer watches an ammunition-dump burning on the hastily-abandoned ground east of Robecq. Our line, held at first by the 51st Division and subsequently by the 61st, was driven back on the eastern fringe of this village on April 12th. It remained there until the 14th, when the sharp re-entrant hereabouts was straightened out.

and the lad fought on till he was killed."[1] This is from the account of the German officer, on whom, and on whose men, the act made a great impression.

North of Armentières

In the IX Corps zone, north of Armentières, the 25th Division, having parted with the 74th Brigade, which had fought so well at Bac St. Maur, had two brigades—the 75th and 7th—in line. The 19th Division had the 57th and 58th Brigades in front line, and the 56th in reserve. Of the 9th Division, only the 27th Brigade was in the line, the 26th and South African Brigades being in reserve behind the 58th Brigade.

The enemy, profiting by a thick mist, attacked early in the morning, and drove the 25th and 19th Divisions back a distance of 4,000 yards. Then the resistance of the infantry, backed by that of the guns firing point-blank, brought the assault to a halt and enabled reserve lines to be organised. "Plugstreet" and Messines, however, had been lost.

Against the 27th Brigade, beyond overrunning a few forward posts, the assailants met with no success. They were driven back from the Damstrasse and the White Château by the 11th and 12th Royal Scots. Failing in his attacks, the enemy settled down to shell out these gallant battalions with heavy mortars, but could not get them to budge. They suffered severe punishment, and took it dourly: they would get their own back in time.

The Germans did not press their initial success with any great vigour. The British, for their part, delivered a series of counter-attacks, of which the most important was a very gallant attempt by the South African Brigade to recover Messines. This brigade consisted almost entirely of young soldiers, the old brigade having been annihilated in an epic combat during the Somme battle. Nevertheless, one battalion cleared the village, and another charged over the ridge and drove the Germans down the eastern slopes. The Dominion troops were too weak to maintain their positions; but their fierce *riposte* imposed a distinct check on the activities of the German just when his morale was at its peak.

Meanwhile, a Cameron patrol, sent forward to discover the situation in Wytschaete, found the village unoccupied and decided to hold it. This tiny detachment repelled all minor assaults, and was just on the point of being overwhelmed by a major attack, when a counter-stroke, delivered by the 61st Brigade sent up from reserve, saved it and definitely secured the village.

The situation of the IX Corps on the morning of the 11th was that its right was in touch with the XV Corps behind Armentières, and its line ran west of "Plugstreet," west of Messines but along the Messines ridge, east of Wytschaete, and then on to join the old front-line. The sector was very thinly held,

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MEN GOING EAST

Although the Battle of the Lys claimed from both sides all the attention that could be bestowed on it, the Somme front had not become so quiet that its defenders could afford to ignore it. The Villers-Bretonneux attack of April 24th—25th proves so much, and this was preceded by several minor affrays. Here we see British troops moving up to take over a sector of the line near Mailly-Maillet.

[1] *History of the 34th Division*, p. 219.

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by a mixture of broken and disorganised units. Two brigades—the 108th and the 148th—sent up as a reinforcement by the army, were in reserve.

Foch is Convinced at Last

It was on this day that Haig at last persuaded Foch to the belief that Ludendorff was making a definite attempt to destroy the British Army, and got him to take serious steps for its reinforcement. The French commander had been for a long time an instructor at the Staff College, and was a little inclined to expound academic principles at moments when urgent action would have been more appropriate. He won through, indeed, in the end, but he took grave and at times unnecessary risks in the process; and it is doubtful if victory would have graced his efforts had not his imaginative and ebullient mentality been countered and steadied by Haig's sober and solid judgment.

Operations were hampered everywhere by the crowds of refugees on the roads. For months—years, almost—the sector under assault had been regarded as a quiet front; and, consequently, thousands of the inhabitants had returned to their old quarters, and had been pursuing their avocations often quite close to the trenches. Now they were suddenly expelled, and presented a pitiful spectacle as they trailed away with such goods as they could salve from their abandoned homes. "Grandmother in arm-chair, pushed by grandson; mother with sack of cooking gear leading cow; small girl with calf; old man pushing bicycle used as a sort of pack animal carrying two beds. . . . All dressed in Sunday black." [1]

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DEFENDING THE RAILWAY

A Lewis-gun post on the railway near Merris, April 12th, 1918. This village is among those which covered the approach to Hazebrouck, and the railway is the Dunkirk—Hazebrouck—Armentières—Lille line. The 31st Division, occupying the sector which included Merris, was heavily attacked during the 12th, and driven back several miles.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

UNFORTUNATE

At a time when their compatriots were carrying all before them, these Germans must have been particularly incensed at the ill-fate which decreed that they should be taken prisoner. Note, incidentally, the apparently wounded man in civilian attire near the rear. The scene is again laid near Merris on April 12th, and little indicates the desperate British retirement then in progress.

On April 11th, the 55th Division stood, as ever, like a rock. The 51st was still involved in a desperate and confused struggle. The young Jocks, short of officers and N.C.O.'s, and untrained to war, fought with astonishing valour. But the disorganisation was great—so great that officers were drawn from the artillery to collect men detached from their units and lead them into action. And right well did the gunners perform their task.

The division was, however, only saved from complete disaster by the arrival, early in the day, of the machine guns of the 39th Division and two battalions—one Warwickshire and one Cornwall—of the 61st Division. The 3rd Division was now up. Its artillery and the 9th Brigade had joined the 55th Division, and the 8th and the 76th Brigades were concentrated near the junction of the latter division with the 51st.

Three Against Barely One

The 50th Division, already weak and shattered, was subjected to the attack of three divisions, and driven right away from the river line. Its retreat was covered by two brigades of the 29th Division, though at heavy cost to the

[1] *History of the 34th Division*, p. 224.

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latter. During the night the 51st and the 50th Divisions regained touch with one another at Merville.

The 40th Division had by this time almost ceased to exist, but the 74th Brigade on its left still held firm. The 93rd Brigade of the 31st Division, which had come up in support, was ordered to make a counter-attack. It did this with great success, re-occupied some of the ground lost by the 40th Division, and made connection with the 74th Brigade. The 31st Division then relieved the 40th, and, extending to the right, made connection with the 29th.

Craigie-Halkett with the 74th Brigade, reinforced by two battalions, actually advanced in the morning to the outskirts of Steenwerck. He was unable, indeed, to maintain his ground there, but he held on stoutly to his original position. He suffered severely in the process, one of his attached battalions—the York and Lancaster—losing 17 officers; but he succeeded in the important task of protecting the right flank of the 34th Division.

The latter division, in its dangerous salient, with the 88th, 121st, and 147th Brigades, which were attached to it, had been attacked early on the 11th; but the attack, delivered against the point of the salient, appeared to be intended only to hold it to its ground while the pincers came into operation from the flanks. As Nicholson felt his right flank to be secure owing to the staunch resistance of the 74th Brigade, he made use of his attached brigades to protect his left flank, which was exposed by the retirement of the 25th Division. Then, at dusk, he withdrew his five brigades, the 88th acting as rearguard. Haig mentions this movement in his despatch: "Accordingly, in the early part of the night, our troops at Nieppe fell back, under orders, to the neighbourhood of Pont d'Achelles."

This sounds simple enough, but actually it was most difficult. For instance, the rendezvous fixed for one brigade was found to be in hostile possession. Moreover, the enemy, suspecting the movement, put down a barrage on both the railway and the road. However, the withdrawal was successfully accomplished; and the commander must have experienced a just pride in evading the trap so skilfully set for him.

Bad Day for the 25th Division

In the IX Corps, the 25th Division had a bad day. On the right, the 75th Brigade was exposed to a very heavy attack. It succeeded in holding its own for some hours, but the Germans, intent on cutting off the 34th Division, would not be denied. They broke through the centre of the brigade, thrusting the two

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AT HESDIN IN APRIL, 1918

To be exact, on April 14th, at a moment when French cavalry were passing through this British-garrisoned town. Hesdin was an important point in our lines of communication, standing as it did well back from the line, on the Arras—St. Pol—Montreuil—Étaples highway; and it would be even more difficult in this case than in most to estimate the number of khaki figures which between 1914 and 1918 passed through its streets.

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halves apart. One half—the more important—was succoured by a counter-stroke on the part of Nicholson's attached brigades. The other fell back, but was not seriously pursued.

The 7th Brigade had started the day in an unpleasant salient. The retirement of the 75th Brigade accentuated this handicap, and enabled the enemy to cut in by the right flank. The 1/4th K.S.L.I. maintained itself stoutly there,

Photo: A. J. Insall.

IN SLEEPY HESDIN

Present-day Hesdin reflects little indeed of the bygone bustle and hubbub. Like so many other French provincial towns, it is for 90 per cent. of the time a dead-sleepy spot, and during the remaining 10 per cent. is a typical market-centre, very similar to Montreuil.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

HESDIN: THE BELFRY

The comely belfry is situated on the main square, and is an excellent example of the fine Renaissance and post-Renaissance buildings so richly distributed among the towns of French and Belgian Flanders.

but the brigadier realised that he must retire, and issued orders accordingly. Unfortunately, a divisional order telephoned later was understood to mean that the battalions were to hold out to the end. The result was that the brigade was overwhelmed, and suffered very severe losses.

Further north, the 19th and 9th Divisions had a successful day. The South African Brigade, now reduced to the strength of a battalion, had some ding-dong fighting, in which it held its own well; and some attacks against the 26th and 27th Brigades were completely defeated. When, however, disaster fell upon the 7th Brigade, the 19th Division had to swing its right far back to connect with the 25th, and the 9th had to conform.

By nightfall, the threat against Hazebrouck was distinctly menacing. The Germans had already advanced nine miles at the point of deepest penetration, and their attack had by no means lost momentum. The great pocket was held thinly, by troops who were not fully trained, and who were already somewhat shaken and disorganised. There were no reserves im-

Photo: A. J. Insall.

A CHARMING GLIMPSE

There is a touch of Canterbury in this old-world peep of post-war—and pre-war—Hesdin. The town was, like most others, subject to periodical air-raids, one of which, in 1918, resulted in the mayor's house receiving a direct hit. This brought the building crashing to the ground about the mayor—without, however, injuring him.

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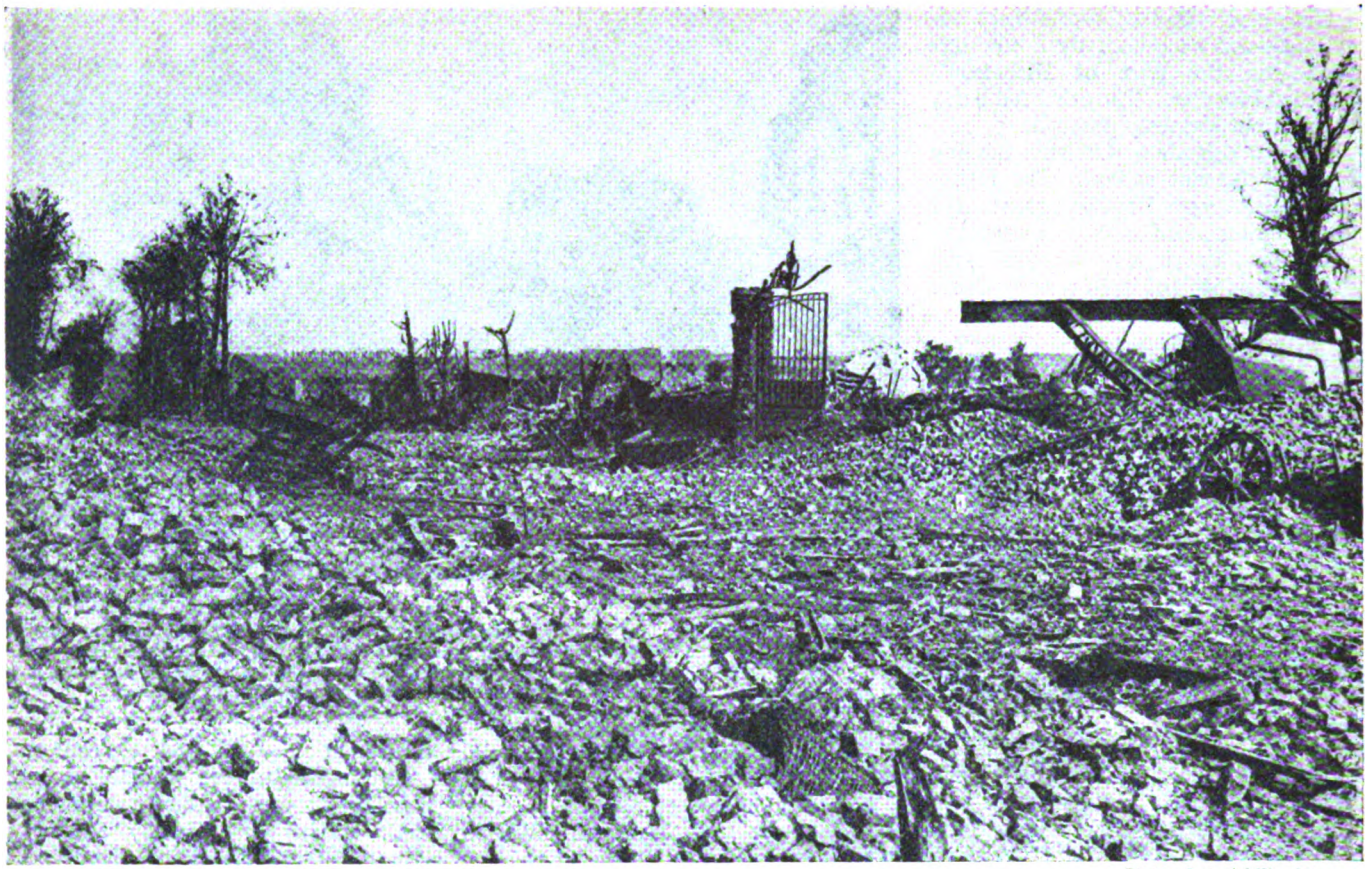

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE SPOILS OF VICTORY

A view of the town of Meteren, taken the day after its capture by the 9th Division on July 19th, 1918. This event, which also entailed the securing of some 350 prisoners, was an important one for us, as the village stands on high ground, and its possession gave greater depth to our defence. A feature of the British attack was that, although no gas-discharge accompanied it, the enemy were all found wearing their gas-masks. They had mistaken smoke-shells for gas-shells. Long before this period there had been not a house in Meteren left standing.

mediately available. Plumer had denuded his army to send reinforcements firstly to the Somme and then to the Lys, and the Somme front had already been bled white of British troops. The four French divisions earmarked to support the British front were not due to move from the Somme till the 12th.

The Kaiser on the Scene

Prospects, then, of a successful resistance on the 12th were not bright. The Kaiser, who liked to be on the spot when success was in the offing, visited Army Headquarters on the 11th, and expressed his conviction that each individual would do his utmost to secure a decisive victory over " our British enemy." [1]

The 12th proved, as anticipated, a critical day. The flanks held staunchly as ever, and the centre near Vierhouck also stood fast. But the enemy effected deep penetrations on either side of the centre. On this day the weather was fine, and the R.A.F., which had been embarrassed earlier in the battle by the loss of its forward aerodromes, rendered valuable service in stemming the enemy's advance by bombing him on the few roads to which he was confined in traversing wide areas of marshy ground.

Only one attack was made against the 55th Division, and that was easily repulsed. A sudden and disastrous collapse occurred, however, on the front of the 51st Division. Owing to faulty reconnaissance, and to weak resistance at a particular spot, the enemy was enabled to effect a surprise, and broke through as far as the headquarters of the two brigades in the line. One of these was captured complete, and the other only just managed to escape.

At this crisis the artillery performed prodigies of valour, and was largely responsible for bringing the advance to a halt. The batteries soon found themselves in the front line. There, while the detachments fired point-blank, the spare gunners collected stragglers, and with them formed a force of rifles, under cover of which sections limbered up and retired in succession.

Crossing a canal, Majors Davidson and Jack each dropped a gun to hold the particular bridge, and fairly blew the enemy back from it. " It would be difficult," says the historian of the division, " to overestimate the valuable part played by these two guns." Fortunately, the enemy, after a brilliant start, failed to exploit his success, and the 51st was able to fall back over the Clarence river, the line of which was then held by the 61st Division, whose two brigades had also been involved in the collapse that morning. This abrupt retreat was most disconcerting to the 3rd Division, which lay between the 55th and the 51st, and forced Deverell to throw his left far back along the canal to Robecq, where it connected with the 61st Division.

West of Merville

North of the Lys and west of Merville, the remnants of the 50th Division, supported on the left by the 4th Guards Brigade, were able, though opposed by a fresh division, to limit their retirement to 1,500 yards. On their right they were greatly helped by Brigadier-General

[1] *Official History*, 1918, ii, p. 253.

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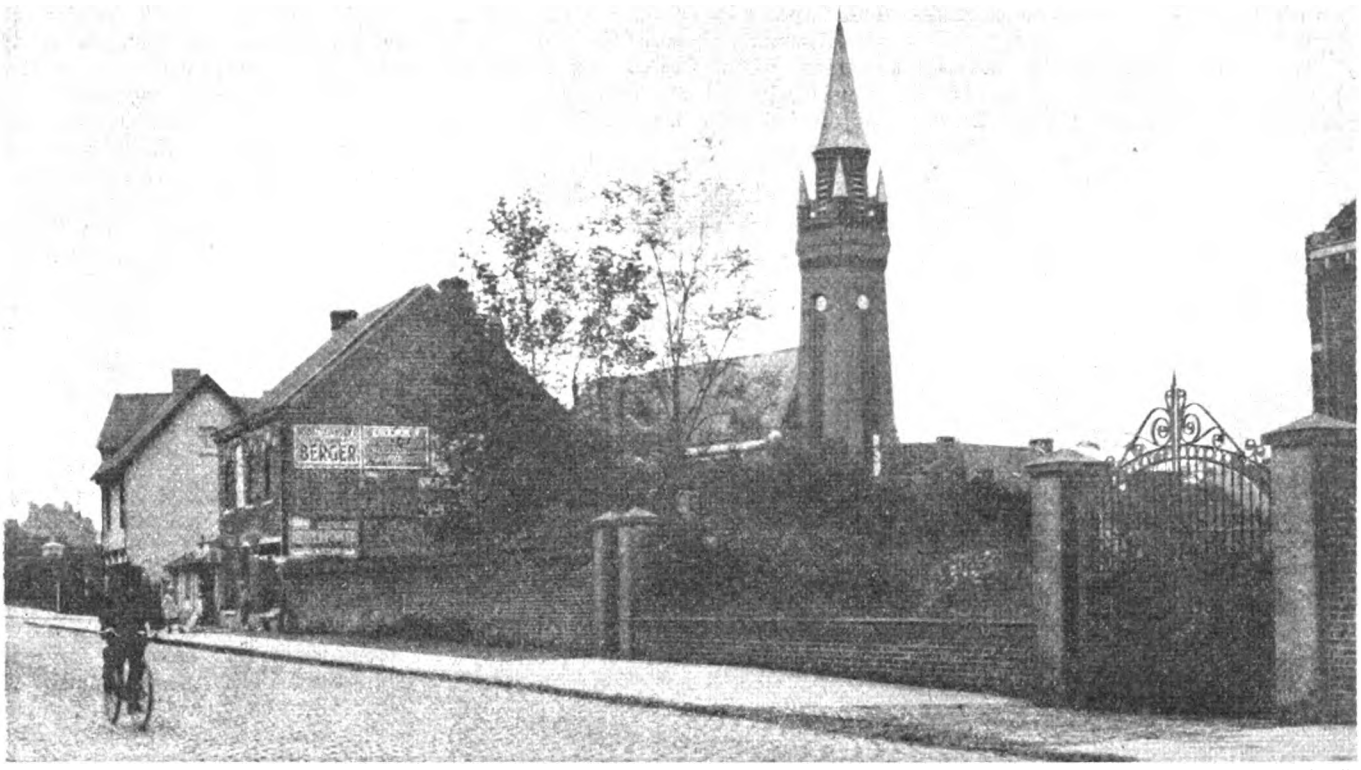

Photo: A. J. Insall.

METEREN: MAIN STREET AND CHURCH

The situation of this village is 3 km. due west of Bailleul, on the main Bailleul—Caestre—Cassel road. In the enemy's Lys offensive of 1918, Meteren was lost on April 16th. Moving forward under cover of fog, the Germans annihilated a company of the 4th King's, and drove the remaining 33rd Division troops in this sector back on to the village. Then, about 9.30 a.m., they cut off a company of the 2nd New Zealand Entrenching Battalion which had moved in front of Meteren (this was the largest capture of New Zealanders in the War) and took full possession of the ruins.

Elles with the Lewis guns of the 11th Tank Battalion and a number of stragglers he had collected. The 4th Guards Brigade, ordered to make an advance, suffered heavily in doing so, and, by nightfall, was back in its original position, where it repulsed all attempts to dislodge it.

The 5th Division now appeared on the battlefield. It had arrived fresh from Italy with thirteen battalions of comparatively old soldiers—a splendid reinforcement. It marched through the Forest of Nieppe and took over the line of the 50th Division, thus firmly blocking the road to Hazebrouck. The divisional artillery, which had moved by road, was in position by 6 p.m., having covered 47 miles in less than two days.

To the north, matters went badly. In the XV Corps, a dent five miles wide and three miles deep was made. The Germans, six divisions strong, employed infiltration combined with enfilade fire—tactics which proved most effective. Their success was obtained almost entirely against four brigades of the 29th and 31st Divisions. On the left of the latter, the six brigades of the 34th Division, under Nicholson, held their own, but were forced to throw back a defensive flank as far as Bailleul.

Between that town and the left of the 31st Division there yawned, however, a tremendous gap, which the 33rd Division, hurrying up, fortunately arrived just in time to fill. It was in this gap that the machine guns of the division, under Lieutenant-Colonel G. S. Hutchison, performed a signal service to the Army. They held their important position from April 12th to 19th, inflicting very severe losses on the enemy, and making a considerable contribution to his ultimate defeat. In the IX Corps, the two right brigades were forced to fall back about a mile, but on the rest of the front all attacks were repelled without difficulty.

Ypres Salient Flattened

It was on this day that Plumer shortened his line by withdrawing from the Ypres Salient to the chord at its base. The Germans did not interfere with the operation, though at the moment Prince Rupprecht was contemplating an attempt to pinch out the Salient, and had issued orders that his troops were to strike as soon as any signs of evacuation became apparent.

With April 12th there passed what Winston Churchill regards, after the Marne, as the climax of the War. On the 13th, the German offensive was directed mainly against the British centre and left. It obtained no success worthy of mention, except at two places. In the centre the 4th Guards Brigade, sadly weakened and widely distributed, was subjected to a very heavy attack and driven back about a mile. In the left centre, the enemy broke through the 75th Brigade and captured Neuve Eglise.

In the south, the 55th Division retook Route A Keep—a post won from it on April 9th. The enemy tried all day to regain possession of the Keep, but without success. Against the front between La Bassée Canal and the Bourré, held by the 61st and half the 5th Divisions, the Germans made four fierce assaults, all of which were re-

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pulsed. But that there was a bitter struggle may be gauged from the fact that the 5th Division drew that night no less than "2½ million rounds of small-arm ammunition to replace expenditure." [1]

The sector immediately covering Hazebrouck was held by the 95th Brigade (5th Division), the 4th Guards Brigade, and portions of the 29th and 31st Divisions. It was attacked by four German divisions. The 95th Brigade—men of Devon and Cornwall—repulsed all assaults. The Guards, spread over a front of 4,500 yards, and assailed by four regiments, fought magnificently, but were eventually driven back on the Australians, who had formed a line behind them. On the left, Captain Pryce and his company of the Grenadier Guards "held out until evening, when, ammunition being exhausted, he led the survivors in two bayonet charges, from which only one man escaped." [1]

[1] *Official History*, 1918, ii, p. 286.

250 Survivors—out of 3,000

The Guards had, in fact, made a glorious defence, characterised by Haig as one of the finest exploits of the War, and, together with the other troops in the sector, had "covered the detrainment of the 1st Australian Division and saved Hazebrouck." [1] Not a single straggler had been seen behind the brigade, and all that remained at the end of the day were 250 men, out of an original strength of nearly 3,000.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

The IX Corps was now facing more south than east. With its centre between Bailleul and Neuve Eglise, it held a salient over twelve miles long. On the southern front were the 19th Brigade and Nicholson's troops, staunch but worn. Round the eastern corner of the salient were four brigades under the 25th Division.

In the latter sector, a serious reverse was suffered. At 5 a.m., the Germans massed in the fog close up to the 75th Brigade, and then, without any preliminary bombardment, fell upon it. Their success was complete, and through the gap they poured like a torrent. Some turned to the left behind Nicholson's line; others struck at Neuve Eglise; others again tried to roll up the 100th and 148th Brigades.

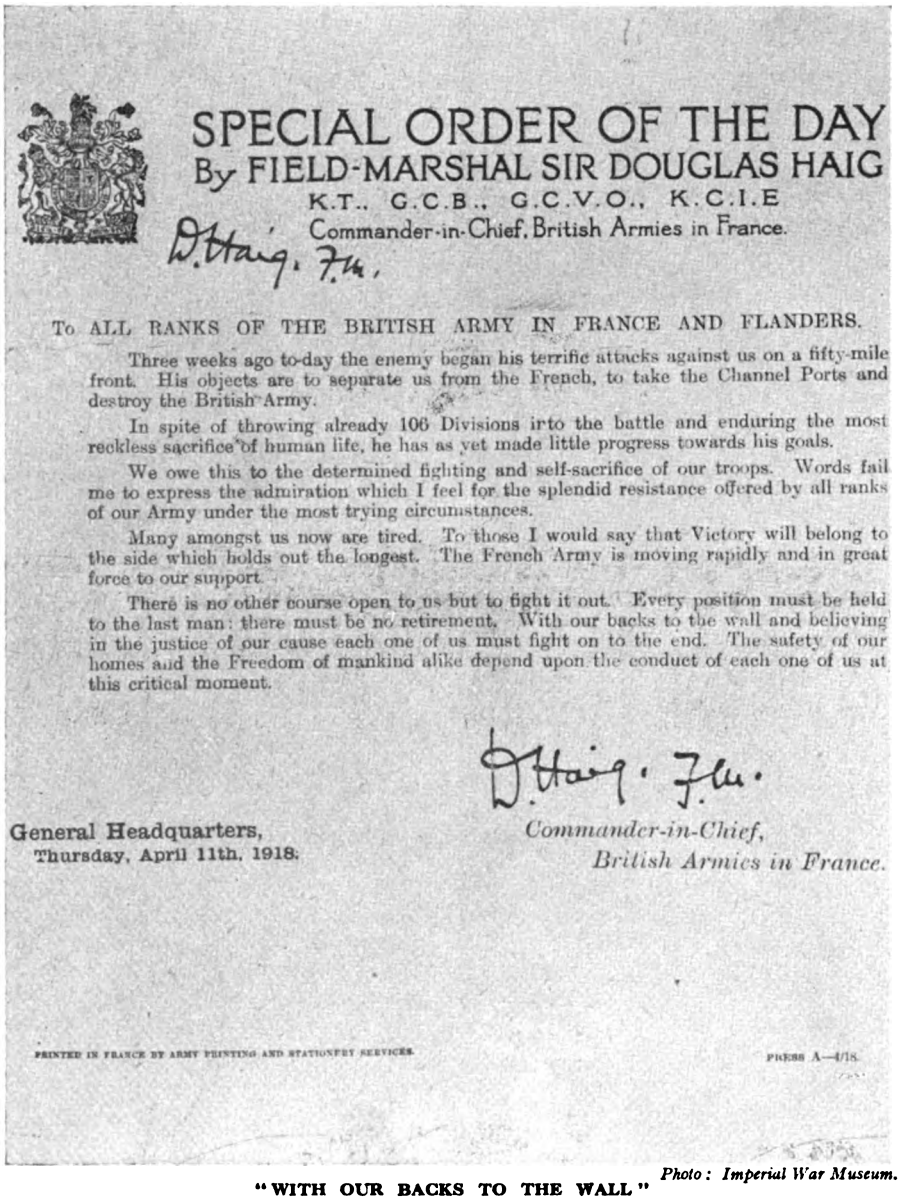
One party was held up for many hours by the 9th H.L.I. Another was driven by the 458th Field Company R.E., and a company of the 2nd Worcestershires, out of Neuve Eglise, into the arms of the 1/4th York and Lancasters, who, seeing the enemy in their rear, had reversed their parapet. On the flanks of the gap, alike to right and to left, battalions which were attacked in rear refused to move, and fought on stubbornly. The enemy had penetrated indeed, but was ringed with steel.

On the right of the corps, the Germans, fighting fiercely all day, managed, though with great difficulty, to drive back the 19th Brigade about half a mile. Nicholson was attacked by six divisions, two of which were fresh—a matter that counted for much at this period of the battle. The assailants, who had to cross open ground against well-posted defenders, supported by a fully-organised artillery, suffered heavy losses, but eventually succeeded in driving back our left about 1,000 yards.

A Skilful Retirement

Nicholson had a trying day. No sooner did he learn of the disaster to the 75th Brigade, than he heard that the enemy was behind his left rear. He at once made provisional arrangements for a retirement, but continued to hold his ground, in the expectation that reinforcements would close the gap. So stoutly did his troops resist that when

[1] *Ibid.*



SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY
By FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG
K.T., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E
Commander-in-Chief, British Armies in France.

D. Haig. F.M.

To ALL RANKS OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS.

Three weeks ago to-day the enemy began his terrific attacks against us on a fifty-mile front. His objects are to separate us from the French, to take the Channel Ports and destroy the British Army.

In spite of throwing already 106 Divisions into the battle and enduring the most reckless sacrifice of human life, he has as yet made little progress towards his goals.

We owe this to the determined fighting and self-sacrifice of our troops. Words fail me to express the admiration which I feel for the splendid resistance offered by all ranks of our Army under the most trying circumstances.

Many amongst us now are tired. To those I would say that Victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest. The French Army is moving rapidly and in great force to our support.

There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our homes and the Freedom of mankind alike depend upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment.

D. Haig. F.M.

General Headquarters,
Thursday, April 11th, 1918.

Commander-in-Chief,
British Armies in France.

PRINTED IN FRANCE BY ARMY PRINTING AND STATIONERY SERVICES.

PRESS A—4/18.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

"WITH OUR BACKS TO THE WALL"

Probably the most famous Army order issued during the whole of the War, this historic document needs introduction to none. The circumstances of its issuing are as well known as the splendid way in which its exhortations were obeyed, and more than obeyed. But it must be admitted that, as a message designed to hearten those in an anything but heartening situation, the celebrated "backs-to-the-wall" order was about as cold comfort as G.H.Q. could have devised.

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VILLERS-BRETONNEUX

Then and Now

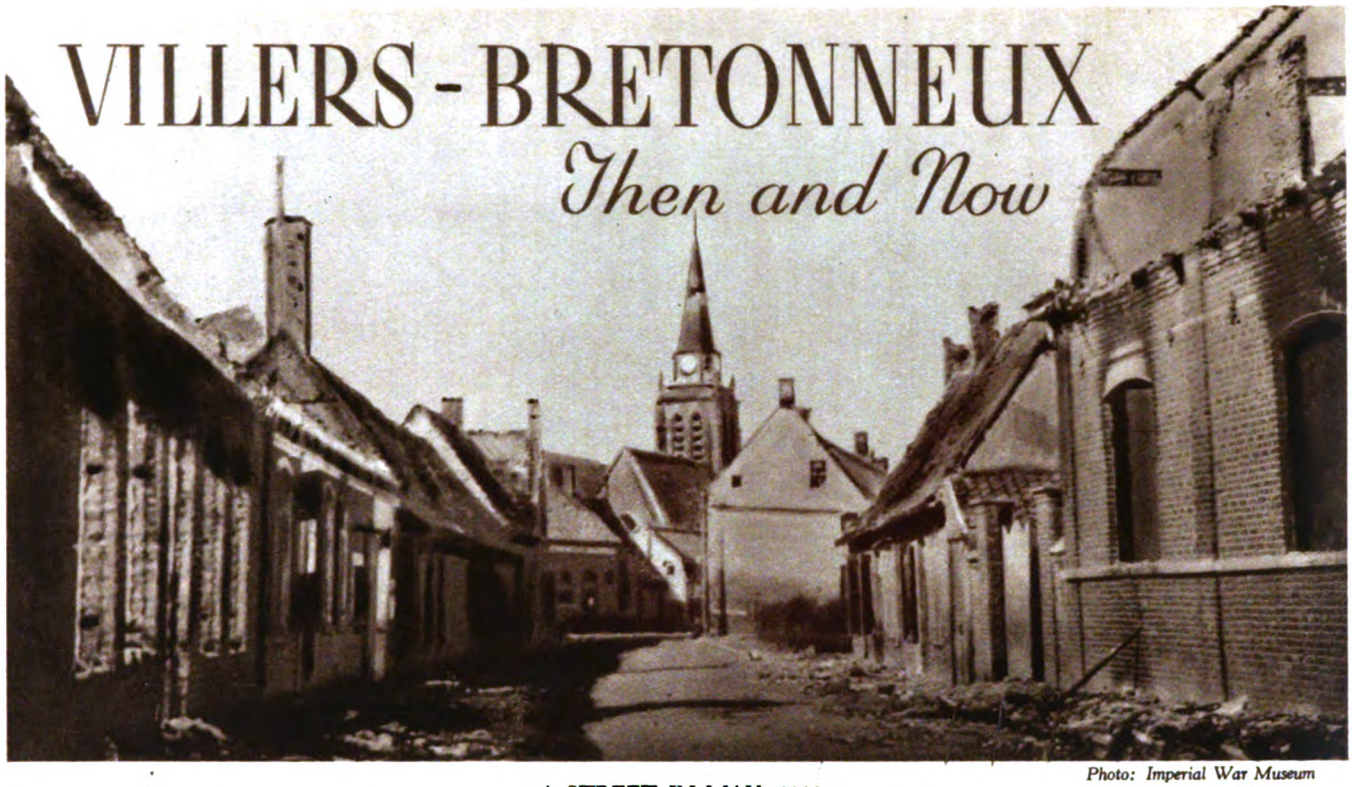

Photo: Imperial War Museum

A STREET IN MAY, 1918

It is inevitable that a village so famous as Villers-Bretonneux should already have received considerable notice in the captions of TWENTY YEARS AFTER; for this place was to the Australians what Ypres was to the defenders of the Salient, or Arras to those holding the country on either side of the Scarpe. The strange, isolated battle of the 24th–25th April, 1918, when the enemy made his sudden final thrust at Amiens, and captured Villers-Bretonneux only to lose it within a few hours, ranks among the most dramatic episodes of the War.

Photo: G. T. Watson

A STREET IN MAY, 1937

The street is the same as that shown in the War picture, and is called the Rue de Montdidier. Rather oddly, perhaps, the rebuilding of the village has rendered it no longer possible to secure the vista of the church formerly obtainable; although whether this is due to the increased height of some new structure, or to a deviation in the remade road, our photographer was unable to determine. Many will remember the Rue de Montdidier as leading toward Crucifix Corner and the south.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

RUINS OF THE CHÂTEAU

Villers-Bretonneux first came into the British area of the front during the second half of 1915, when we extended our line south of the Somme. It was then some distance behind the firing-line, and from late September onward became the home of No. 11 Fighter Squadron, R.F.C., whose aerodrome was outside the village, on the Demuin road. An interesting point in connection with this aerodrome, as with others, is that its wooden sheds were erected by British *civilian* labour, specially brought over for the purpose.

Photo: G. T. Watson

WHERE OF OLD THE CHÂTEAU STOOD

To the uninformed this might well appear to be a reconstructed version of the château, but in point of fact it is the new Mairie, or administrative building of the commune, standing on the site of the château. The remains of the latter were entirely cleared away after the Armistice, and the whole layout of the area was altered. The War photograph reproduced at the top of the page was taken on August 17th, 1918.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

GERMAN STRONG-POINT NEAR THE ORCHARD

A photograph dated July 10th, 1918. Apart from this area known as the Orchard, a number of small woods surround Villers-Bretonneux, some of which were prominent in the fighting of April 24th–25th, 1918. Best known are the three woods, adjacent to one another, on the west of the village; these bear the names Bois d'Aquenne, Bois l'Abbé, and Bois de Blangy. The Cachy–Fouilloy road, which runs between the two first-named, is celebrated as being the nearest point to Amiens reached by the Germans in 1918.

Photo: G. T. Watson

A BED OF ROSES

The modern counterpart of the Orchard is a nursery on the same site, with extensive rose-tree cultivation. Bushes and shrubs of all kinds can here be purchased for the replanning and replanting schemes which are still far from complete in and about the village. Villers-Bretonneux—to which, indeed, the term "village" is scarcely applicable any longer—is to-day a centre of considerable local industry, especially of textile manufacture.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

VILLERS-BRETONNEUX: THE SQUARE

Prominent among the shattered buildings is the church, here seen as it appeared on May 21st, 1918—within a month of Villers-Bretonneux's "own" battle. In that short but hard-fought conflict one of the most important features of the place was the railway station, where the 2nd West Yorkshires, reduced to 140 men, put up a gallant defence on the morning of April 24th. During the counter-attack, the Germans at first resisted strongly along the railway embankment, and later a brilliant attempt to cut off all the enemy in the village by securing the station was made by the 2nd Northamptonshires.

Photo: G. T. Watson

THE MODERN SQUARE

Showing the church in the background. The most noteworthy feature of the new square seems to be the rectangular asphalt patch in the middle. This becomes quite extensive toward the centre, and is used on Saturday nights for dancing!

Photo: G. T. Watson

TALL, DARK, AND HANDSOME

Whatever the appearance or venerable age of the pre-war building, one feels that Villers-Bretonneux's new church is a piece of architecture which could hardly be bettered in the twentieth century. Its height makes it a conspicuous landmark.

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he withdrew, late at night, his retirement was practically unmolested. Unluckily, at this moment Brigadier-General Gore, who had led his brigade finely throughout the battle, was killed.

Looking at the day's results as a whole, there had been no change on the right; the centre had fallen back a mile, but there the 1st Australian Division had come up, and Hazebrouck seemed secure; on the left, the enemy had penetrated 2½ miles, and seemed to be aiming at the high ground about Kemmel.

Throughout the operations, the supply both of food and of ammunition had been admirably conducted. The lorry-drivers had worked splendidly; and on this night, in addition to their usual tasks, they had to evacuate 700 lunatics from the asylum at St. Venant—a strange duty at the height of battle.

To the enemy, April 13th was a disappointment. "We were accustomed," wrote a German officer after the War, "to definite success in attaining our objective everywhere—in Serbia, in front of Verdun, in Rumania, in Italy. For the first time, on this 13th April, we succeeded in gaining only a few hundred metres of ground. I think I may say that the defenders on the British Front in April, 1918, were the best troops of the many with whom we crossed swords in the course of the four and a quarter years." [1]

On April 14th not much change took place. The Germans, except for a little shelling, left our right severely alone. On our part, the 1st Somerset L.I. and the 1st Hampshires pinched in a small re-entrant, capturing 135 prisoners and 20 machine guns in the process, and recovering two batteries of the 51st Division which had been lost. The 61st and 5th Divisions were driven to strenuous fighting all day, but repulsed the enemy everywhere on their front. Two strong brigades of the 5th stopped two and a half hostile divisions.

Meteren and its Ridge Held

All attacks failed, in similar fashion, against the 1st Australians. The 19th Brigade, in its important task of covering Meteren, had again a hard day. The enemy, in three fierce assaults, won a few minor successes against it, but at nightfall Meteren and the ridge on which it stands were still in British possession. Between Bailleul and Crucifix Corner, Nicholson, with the remains of eight brigades, was attacked by four divisions, but in somewhat desultory fashion. The enemy obtained a footing at two places, but was at once thrown out by counter-attacks. During the night the line was taken over by two brigades of the 59th Division, and Nicholson's brigades were withdrawn into second line.

The situation on the fronts of the 25th and 19th Divisions was most complicated. As, however, enemy pressure in that quarter was never great, the line was straightened out. In the course of the morning, the 100 men of the 2nd Worcestershires who were besieged in Neuve Eglise succeeded, by a gallant sortie, in breaking out.

By the morning of April 15th, a satisfactory line had been established: unshakably strong from Givenchy to Robecq; the road to Hazebrouck covered by two divisions each of thirteen battalions; and the front from Meteren to Wytschaete organised in more definite fashion than previously, with supports, albeit weak, in second line.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

LAST OF THE YPRES TRENCHES

Every year sees a reduction in the number of genuine Western Front trenches in existence. If we discountenance such artificially-preserved examples as the trenches at Vimy, with their concrete sandbags, it would seem that Hills 60 and 62, in the Ypres Salient, and the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel, alone can boast genuine relics of the War days in war-time condition. There are still some trenches on the French front, and so-called "trenches" in the British area which have been dug specially to catch tourists; but very, very little else. This contemporary picture shows a trench on Hill 60.

[1] Quoted in *Official History*, 1918, ii, p. 304.

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In consequence of the disappointing results achieved on the 13th and 14th Ludendorff decided to attack only with the *Fourth Army* on his right, whose front extended to the eastern half of Bailleul, while the *Sixth Army* reorganised its communications, brought up its artillery, and prepared for a fully-staged assault on or about the 17th. Hostile activity was therefore limited on the 15th to the ground east and north of Bailleul. On this front, the 176th Brigade (59th Division) was covering Bailleul, and the 177th was on its left, holding the line as far as Crucifix Corner. Beyond lay the 71st, and then, on either side of Wulverghem, the 178th and 108th Brigades.

New Enemy Attack

The first attack was made against the two last-named brigades. It won a minor success against a battalion of the 108th Brigade, but was completely repulsed by the 178th. At noon a bombardment of great intensity was opened on the trenches at and about Crucifix Corner, and was extended two hours later over the whole front of the 177th Brigade and over part of the fronts of the 176th and 71st Brigades. The infantry assault was launched at 2.45 p.m.

Although the 59th Division had been nearly annihilated in the Somme battle, and therefore consisted almost entirely of young soldiers—who were, moreover, holding too extended a line for their numbers—its two brigades fought finely for two hours. The enemy, indeed, penetrated at Crucifix Corner and at Mont de Lille, but was at once ejected by counter-attacks. Later, numbers told, the fiercely-disputed corner was captured, and the enemy, wheeling left, swept along the Ravelsberg ridge in rear of the defenders, forcing them to retreat.

The two brigades then fell back through Nicholson's troops, who thus found themselves, without a rest, once more in the forefront of the battle. The 71st Brigade first formed a defensive flank, and afterwards withdrew, under orders, to the second line. The troops further to the left conformed, so that at daybreak the corps was in a new line behind Bailleul and Wulverghem. On this day French reserves began to collect behind the British line, but in no case did they take over any of our trenches.

It is interesting to note that the Field Censor " reported, judging from letters written home, that the morale of the troops was extremely good . . . and that ' grousing ' had ceased. Rumour

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

BEHIND A BAILLEUL BARRICADE

This is one of the last photographs taken in Bailleul before its fall to the Germans in the Battle of the Lys : a little group of Middlesex men are seen holding a street barricade. The picture was taken on April 15th, 1918, and the same day the British were driven from the town. The 34th Division, IX Corps, was the formation concerned ; but the last man to leave Bailleul was the Machine Gun Corps officer who is the author of our " Memories " chapter, " A Machine-Gunner Looks Back."

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had it that the improvement in morale was chiefly due to the cessation of trench fatigues." [1]

On April 16th there was no general attack. The Germans concentrated their energies on Meteren and Wytschaete, and captured both. They won their success against the former by filtering through Bailleul and then breaking through a gap which they found on the left of the 33rd Division. The loss of the town was a serious disaster; the 1st Middlesex counter-attacked and won back the northern outskirts, but could get no further. With the help of the 5th Cameronians, however, who had beaten off all attacks, and of the 1st Australian Division, which extended its line for the purpose, a fresh front was formed and the danger averted.

[1] Quoted in *Official History*, 1918, ii, p. 327.

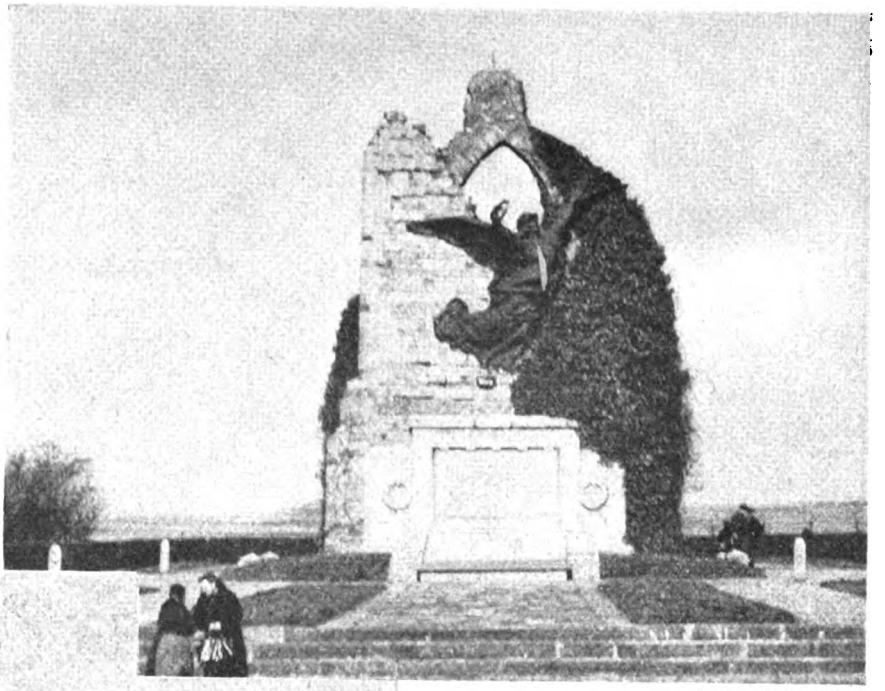

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A FITTING MEMORIAL

Once more, as at Lacouture (*see page* 1305), a ruin of war-time has been converted into a memorial in the days of peace. The British association with Bailleul is a long one, for it extends from our first capture of it in October, 1914, to the last months of the War.

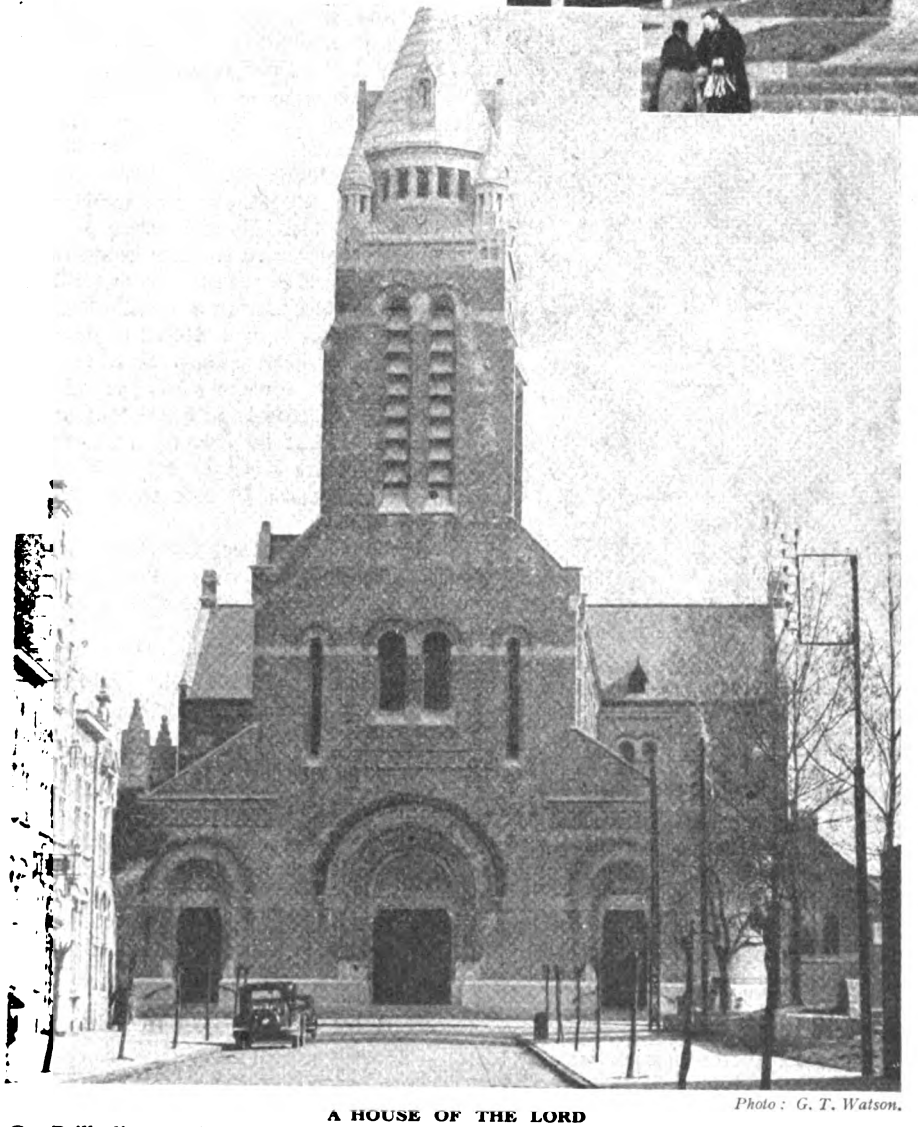

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A HOUSE OF THE LORD

Or, Bailleul's new church. The Lahore Division of Indian troops was here in 1914, following the III Corps's capture of the town; and thenceforth a succession of British formations occupied it until April, 1918. The recapture was effected on August 30th, 1918, by the 9th, 29th, and 31st Divisions.

A Brilliant Feat

During this action, two sections of the 11th Field Company R.E. recaptured a farm, bayoneted 30 Germans, and took 16 prisoners with three machine guns. This was but one of many brilliant feats of arms performed throughout the battle by sapper companies, which not only were ceaselessly at work at their own engineering duties, but in every grave emergency were employed either to fill a gap or restore a situation.

Further north, the enemy, after a fierce bombardment, attacked through a natural fog, which he had thickened with gas and smoke. Being much superior in numbers, he overwhelmed the defenders and, as said, captured Wytschaete and the great Messines crater. Elsewhere the attack, directed mainly against Headlam's 64th Brigade, failed completely.

A counter-attack on a large scale was organised for 6 p.m., in which two French divisions were to take part, together with British troops. At 5 p.m., when our arrangements were complete, the French postponed the hour to 7.30 p.m. Later, they said they could employ only three battalions, and finally they decided to take no part at all. Although this failure was most upsetting

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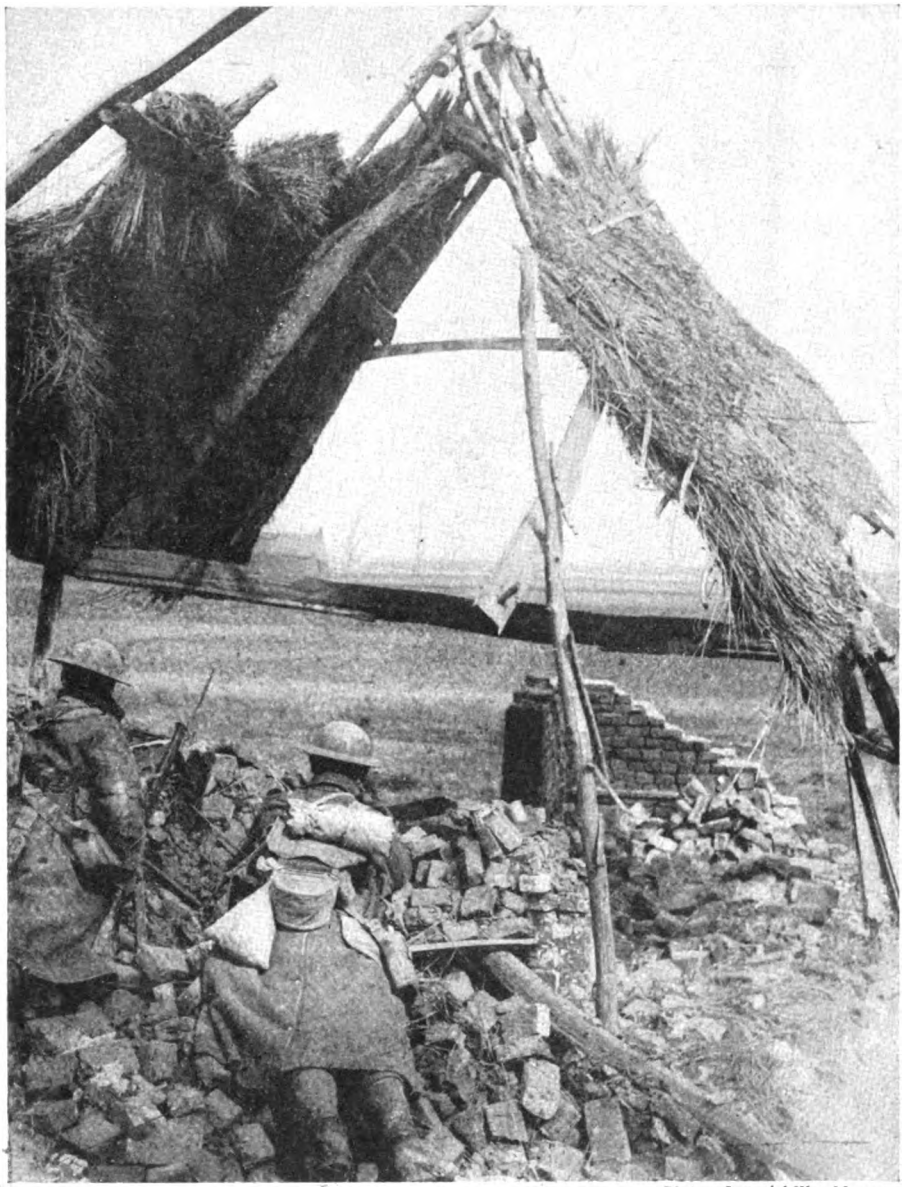

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AN OUTPOST AT MARQUOIS

Taken on April 13th, 1918, this illustration shows an outpost of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in a ruined barn at Marquois. The day was marked by German progress in three sectors: toward the Forêt de Nieppe, Strazeele, and Meteren; between Bailleul and Neuve Eglise; and against both British and Belgian forces holding the Ypres Salient. In the last-named area our most hard-felt loss was that of Passchendaele.

to the plan, the British carried out their attack, the 7th Seaforths, under cover of a smoke barrage, storming Wytschaete.

In this affair Captain Reid and C.S.M. Jeffries rushed a pill-box and captured fourteen prisoners and five machine guns; and there were many other acts of daring. The battalion was, however, too weak to hold all its gains. The other assaulting troops, too, achieved only moderate success, with the result that, though the town was partially enveloped, it was not taken.

In the counter-attack to recover Meteren the French 133rd Division took the leading part. It did not, however, get beyond the British trenches, and there it took over a two-battalion front—the first relief effected by the French in the battle. Away to the north, the withdrawal in the Ypres sector was completed during the night, unnoticed by the enemy.

A Belgian Victory

The 17th April was a particularly bad day for the assailants. Attacks were made against both flanks of the Ypres Salient. In the north, the German assault from Houthulst Forest against two Belgian divisions was completely defeated. The Belgian Army had reason to be proud of this, the Battle of Merckem. Not only did it maintain its line unbroken, but it captured nearly 800 prisoners and 60 machine guns.

In the south, the attack was intended to reach the great range of Flanders hills from Mont Noir to Kemmel. It fell heavily upon the Australians, who repelled it without difficulty. It fell upon the 98th Brigade, which lost a single farm and regained it at once by counter-attack. It fell upon Nicholson's wasted brigades, and met with no better fortune. Against the XXII Corps, where more French troops had come into line, it also won and lost a single farm. In fact, it failed everywhere, with such heavy loss that Ludendorff nearly decided to abandon the whole operation. The Germans had suffered particularly severely from our aircraft that day, more than double the usual dose of bombs being dropped on them.

Our troops by no means escaped scot-free. They lay all day under a severe bombardment, which greatly reduced their depleted ranks. This steady diminution of his strength made Haig very anxious. He felt that he had already demanded the maximum of his army. Most of the divisions now fighting had been shattered on the Somme, and had now been shattered again. He felt that, if the enemy were to mass many fresh divisions for yet another blow, his hardly-tried line might break, and he might be driven to the coast. He therefore strongly urged Foch to send yet more French troops to his assistance.

In the meantime, the *Sixth Army*, ever since its failure on the 14th, had been preparing a great stroke, and intended to clear the left of the *Fourth Army* for the decisive attack toward the hills west of Kemmel. Having collected a great mass of guns, it hurled shell for seven hours against the front of the I Corps, which lay at Givenchy and along La Bassée Canal to Robecq, and which contained three Regular divisions—the 1st, 3rd, and 4th. The bombardment was most effective, putting out of action, for instance, 11 out of the 24 guns of the 275th Brigade R.F.A., and demolishing much excellent cover.

Held by a Garrison of Nine

Shortly after 8 a.m., six German divisions moved to the assault. So close did they keep to their barrage that, having rushed part of the front line at Givenchy, they were on top of the supports before the latter could leave their

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dug-outs. Givenchy Keep, however, held out stoutly, although its garrison of 42 of the 1st Loyals was reduced to 9.

The enemy also re-captured the much disputed Route A Keep, and then, working behind Festubert, nearly cut off the 1st Gloucestershires. That regiment, however, does not wear badges fore and aft for nothing. It faced both ways, and drove off the invaders. At 5 p.m. the attack against the 1st Division ceased, minor successes only having been achieved.

Against the 3rd and 4th Divisions, the attack was less severe. One of the assaulting German divisions would hardly leave its trenches to face the well-organised fire with which it was confronted. Another gallantly attempted to launch pontoons and footbridges in the teeth of a murderous fire. Further to the left, every attempt to advance was frustrated by the perfectly-placed barrages of the artillery. Such few posts as were won by the enemy were for the most part regained.

On the XI Corps front, the 61st and 5th Divisions were able, by gun and machine-gun fire, to repel the mild assault on their trenches. One farm was lost, but the assailants were at once ejected by a platoon of the 2/5th Gloucestershires. On the remainder of the front, attacks were also of a minor nature.

That night the heavily-battered IX Corps was at last relieved, and its war-worn divisions given the rest they had so thoroughly earned. Its heavy artillery and some of its field guns alone remained to cover the French troops which had taken over the line. The relief was completed on the morning of the 21st.

Six Days of "Peace"

For six days after the fighting at Givenchy, comparative peace reigned. The I Corps, in its efforts to improve its line, kept the enemy busy. The 1st South Wales Borderers recaptured Route A Keep, and the Germans once again retook it. The possession of the keep had, in fact, become a matter of prestige—almost a symbol of victory. The 55th Division, having returned to the line, won it back and handed it over to the 46th, which lost it on the 26th, and regained it on the 28th. After that date it remained in our hands.

One of the self-imposed tasks of the infantry in this area was to go out in small parties, either by day or by night, looking for sleeping Germans, who, when found, would be "winkled" into our lines. On other parts of the British front, minor offensive operations were also being carried out, and during the six days the R.A.F. was unceasingly active, dropping bombs of an average daily weight of 25 tons.

During the lull the main question was: Where would the enemy strike his next blow? In Flanders, towards

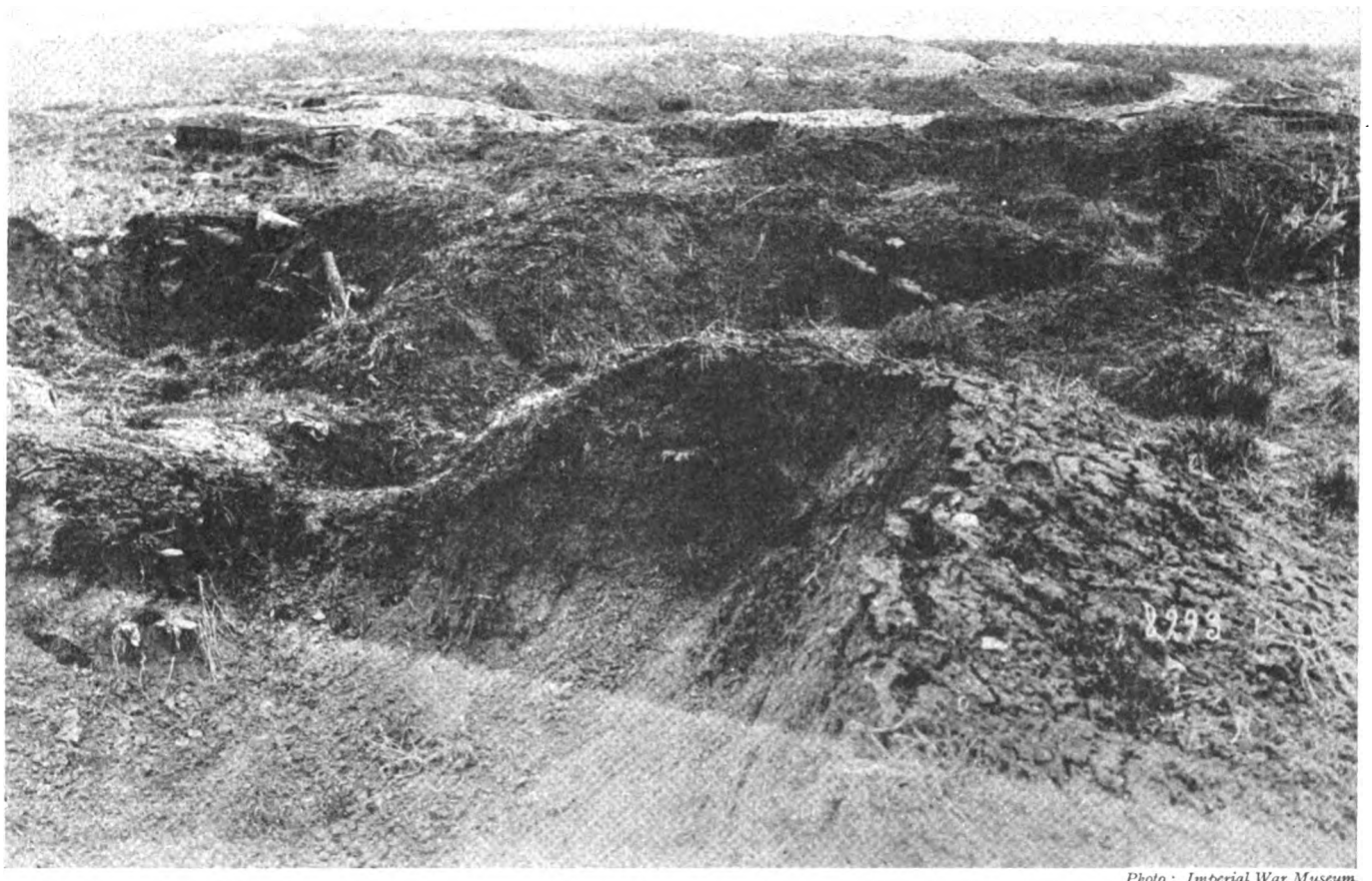

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TYPICAL COUNTRY

A graphic picture of the type of country over which the Germans had to advance in Flanders, as on the Somme. Indeed, there was little to choose between the two battlefields. Both had been so thoroughly and repeatedly devastated that by 1918 their features were almost as formless as those of the sea; and both, by their sheer unhelpfulness, contributed not a little toward the ultimate overthrow of the invader. This picture was taken near the Lys in April, 1918.

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Amiens, or further south? From the 21st onwards, absence of wireless activity and an access of work on communications gave strong indications that the attack in Flanders was to be pursued on a great scale.

On April 25th, the German attack was renewed. It was aimed mainly at Mt. Kemmel, which was held by the French 28th Division, but it fell also on the 154th and 34th French Divisions on the right of the 28th, and on five weak British brigades—the 27th, 146th, 64th, 26th and 39th (composite)—on its left, the chief weight being directed against the centre and left of the Allied line. The intention was to strike in also from the north, should this attack prove successful, with the object of pinching out the Ypres Salient and capturing all British troops within it.

At 2.30 a.m., the bombardment began. It was of the usual type, but uncommonly effective. The Allied batteries were first smothered with gas (chiefly mustard), and then the trenches were pounded by guns and trench-mortars for an hour. Practically all the French guns were silenced, and the French infantry reported the fire to be "far worse than anything ever experienced at Verdun."[1] The British gunners, too, incurred heavier losses per battery than on any other day in the War. The mortars and guns of the 146th T.M. Battery and a company of the 149th Machine Gun Battalion, which were in close support of the French on Kemmel, were destroyed during the bombardment.

French Disaster at Mt. Kemmel

The Germans carried Mt. Kemmel in a single rush. They were in the support trenches on the top of the hill before the French had time to man them. So quick were they that their own barrage held them up and impeded pursuit. They took 2,600 prisoners and 12 guns from the 28th Division, and drove the remainder from the field in disorder.

They thrust back the other two French divisions with almost equal ease; and then, at 11 a.m., by a queer freak of fortune, hesitancy, inspired by fear of counter-attacks, sprang up in the minds of the German Higher Command, and pressure on the French front ceased: Ludendorff had thrown away his last great chance of victory. Untroubled by the Germans, reinforcements reached a line from Locre through the Scherpenberg to La Clytte, past which the remnants of the defeated divisions retired.

[1] *Official History*, 1918, ii, p. 412.

On the left of the French was the 12th Royal Scots—a battalion with a particularly fine record. In the mist of early morning, the enemy reached the wire without being seen. He penetrated at two points, but was at once ejected, and for long hammered at the trenches in vain. Then he took the line of least resistance, flowed through the gap left by the French and enveloped the Lowlanders in flank and rear.

The latter put out a defensive flank, but it was swept away. They retired to the second line, known as the Vierstraat, only to find it in enemy possession. "Here and there a whirling eddy," testified to the "fury of a last stand"[1] as they fought their way back to Cheapside—the third line—to reach it a remnant ninety strong. But they had not been destroyed in vain. Their gallant resistance had gone far to save the British flank from being rolled up.

The 6th K.O.S.B.'s, who were in support, also retired. They lost 50 per cent. of their numbers in doing so; but, on reaching Cheapside, made a spirited counter-attack, and captured fifty-eight prisoners.

A Complicated Situation

How involved the situation on this flank became may be gathered from the fact that, while the K.O.S.B.'s were being fiercely attacked in the second line, they received a message from the Royal Scots to say that the latter were holding the front line successfully. At the same time, behind them, between the second and third lines, they could see the Germans collecting and marching off batches of French prisoners.

Immediately to the left of the Royal Scots, the 1/5th West Yorkshires also repulsed the initial assault. The battalion fought stoutly for two and a half hours without yielding ground. Then, the units on either flank having been driven back, it withdrew, fighting fiercely all the time, to the Vierstraat, where it helped to form a defensive flank. A little further to the left, near the Mound, two companies of the 5th Cameron Highlanders refused to stir until the enemy found a gap beyond their right and began to envelop them. Thereupon, having been joined by two companies of the 7th Seaforths, they formed and held a defensive flank which prevented the Germans from penetrating northward between the first and the second lines.

Perhaps the finest of all fine performances on this critical day was the defence of Hill 44 by the 9th K.O.Y.L.I. Lieutenant-Colonel "Andy" McCulloch—the battalion-commander—occupied this feature, which stood at the western end of Cheapside, as soon as he saw the French retirement and realised how dangerously it might affect the British line. There he was well placed to prevent any hostile turning movement, provided that the French did not retire "into the blue." After beating off several attacks, he was reinforced by the 8th Black Watch and the 15th Durham L.I.; and the combined efforts of these gallant units, under the direction of Brigadier-General Headlam, sufficed to secure the exposed flank during the critical period. Thanks to German hesitancy in pursuit, high courage and skilful leadership had been able to ward off disaster.

A Franco-British counter-attack, under French control, was arranged for 5 p.m., but did not mature. During the night, reinforcements arrived, various adjustments were made, and the line was consolidated.

[1] *History of the 9th Division*, p. 310.

A Great Waste of Lives

On the 26th, the joint counter-attack took place. It was timed to begin at 3 a.m., the French 39th Division moving on the right against Mt. Kemmel, the British 25th Division against the village of Kemmel, and various parties co-operating on the flanks. The staff-work was, however, bad, the artillery was not given sufficient time for preparation, torrents of rain made the ground heavy and the streams deep, and a thick fog, which might have assisted a well-organised operation, proved in the circumstances a distinct handicap.

The 25th Division fought its way resolutely to its objective, some Worcester and Lancashire men going far beyond the village; but, as it could find no French troops on its right, it eventually fell back to the Kemmelbeek and dug in along its banks. The French, who started half-an-hour late, failed to do much more than reach their own front line. The counter-attack was, in short, an unsatisfactory affair, and entailed a great waste of lives. It did, however, have the effect of immobilising the German divisions on whom it fell, and of preventing them from participating in the attack made upon the Allies that day.

That attack opened at 8 a.m. To the south it led to an even struggle between a French and a Bavarian division. To the north, it fell between Vierstraat and the Bluff, a line defended mainly by the Composite Brigade of the 39th Division.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

EAST OF YPRES

This is a photograph of the well-known Birr Cross-roads, 3 km. east of Ypres, which generally formed the limit of wheeled-transport progress at the time when the front line ran through Hooge, 1 km. distant upon the next ridge. The roads which cross are, of course, the Menin Road and the north-and-south Wieltje—Railway Wood—Zillebeke road (Cambridge Road). In the present illustration, which dates from October 25th, 1917, and was taken looking toward the ridge north of Bellewaarde Lake, a 5th Divisional R.E. dump occupies the foreground.

Photo: A. J. Insall.

AT BIRR CROSS-ROADS TO-DAY

Close to the area shown is the point known as the Mecca des Alliés, since from it the whole of the former front astride the Menin Road can be surveyed. There is now a cemetery named after the Cross-roads, 625 United Kingdom, 140 Australian, 15 Canadian, 12 New Zealand, 1 South African, 1 Newfoundland, 1 West Indian, and 11 unidentified dead being buried in it.

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Owing largely to a failure to obtain artillery support in the fog, the British outpost line was driven in south of the Comines Canal as far as the Spoil Bank. North of the Canal, the Bluff, after a vigorous defence, was lost late in the afternoon.

The other attacks were all repulsed, so that the German gains on this day were insignificant. Plumer, however, on hearing of the German success at the Spoil Bank, decided to evacuate his whole outpost line, and to make his existing line of resistance his new outpost line, and Cheapside his new line of resistance. These changes were executed during the night of the 26/27th. On the 26th, Foch ordered another French division and a large number of French guns to the Lys front.

On the 27th, the enemy paused to effect the relief of exhausted divisions, and to replenish supplies prior to the renewal of his efforts. He gassed Nieppe heavily, but, owing to the precautions taken, without much effect. On the 28th, the usual symptoms of impending assault were apparent. Counter-preparation by the artillery was therefore ordered, and, according to reports received later from prisoners, seems to have taken a severe toll of the assaulting troops in their positions of assembly.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AMID THE RUINS OF CUINCHY

A patrol of the 1st Cameron Highlanders (1st Division) in action at ruined Cuinchy on April 17th, 1918. This village, which is situated between La Bassée and Béthune, and slightly south of both, lay just beyond the southern extremity of the front attacked in the Battle of the Lys. The line here remained unchanged from start to finish of the battle, and was held by the 1st Division from April 12th.

A Brilliant German Corps

At 3 a.m. on the 29th, the Germans opened a bombardment on a ten-mile front, which included ground held by parts of the 25th, 49th, 21st, and 6th Divisions. They fired gas-shell for two hours, mainly on the gun-areas, and followed that with "heavies" on the trenches for forty minutes. Then they attacked, with seven divisions in the forward line and four in the second. The *Alpine Corps*, which had won Kemmel, pressed on regardless of losses against the Scherpenberg; it succeeded in capturing the col between Mont Rouge and the Scherpenberg, and also the town of Locre.

Through this success, it set the most alarming rumours in motion. Both G.H.Q. and Foch were told that these two important hills had been lost. Had that proved true, no part of the vital Flanders range could well have been saved. Happily, it was untrue. The situation, however, was such that Haig told Plumer to use his own judgment as to retiring from the Salient, bearing in mind that things are "never so bad, nor so good, as first reports indicate."

The truth of this adage was quickly proved. A patrol sent forward by Craigie-Halkett found that there were neither Germans nor French on Mont Rouge; and shortly afterwards French local reserves, by regaining most of the lost ground, restored the situation.

On the British front, the assault delivered against the 75th, 147th, 148th,

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SIGNALLING THE RESULTS

Here we see an artillery observation officer adjusting his lamp in order to signal back to his battery the results of its fire. The picture comes from the neighbourhood of Kemmel, where it was taken on April 22nd, 1918. This date falls in the midst of what the *Official History* terms "a pause." The First Battle of Kemmel had been fought during April 17th—18th, and the Second was not destined to begin until the 25th.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MAKING IT DIFFICULT

Engineers photographed while wiring fallen trees on the bank of the Lys Canal near St. Floris, May 5th, 1918. St. Floris is on the south bank of the canal about 6 km. west of Merville. It never fell into German hands, but at the peak of the enemy advance it was, so to speak, next on the waiting-list, for our line ran only just east of it. The 61st Division held the sector from April 12th.

and South African Brigades on the right was completely shattered. That against the 89th Brigade, a little further to the left, won part of the outpost line, but was a solitary success which could not be exploited. In the evening the French invited the co-operation of the 75th Brigade in a counter-attack, which was to begin at 5.10 a.m. on the 30th. The 2nd South Lancashires were detailed for the task. They reached their allotted objective, 500 yards ahead, without suffering any casualties. The battalion waited there until 5 a.m. and then, finding no French on its right, withdrew to its original position.

A Matter of Co-operation . . .

Later in the day, the French asked that the operation should be repeated. The South Lancashires advanced again, re-occupied their position, dug in, and waited. Again the French failed to put in an appearance. The gun-fire, they said, had been too heavy for them. The Lancastrians withdrew a second time, but on this occasion they suffered forty-five casualties. Certainly, co-operation between allies is not easily effected.

Thus ended the battle of the Lys. The Germans had attacked a thinly-held line with skill, gallantry, and a vast superiority of numbers. They had attacked at the weakest sector, where our most ancient allies, the Portuguese, were holding an extended line and were expecting relief. They broke through the Iberian troops and rolled up our line to the north. They were within an ace of capturing the 34th Division. They took from us Armentières, Bailleul, Messines, and many other famous towns long in our occupation. They caused us the gravest anxiety for the safety of the Channel Ports. Yet, finally, having bent, but failed to break, the British line, they were in a worse position than when they started the operation. Their numbers had not increased, and they were holding a longer line—a line which, moreover, with its deep pockets, was subject to continual enfilade fire.

Such success as the Germans won was due less to their superiority of numbers than to the fact that they opposed fresh troops to divisions which had been almost destroyed in the Second Battle of the Somme, and which had just been completed by young drafts. The 55th Division—the only one among those first attacked which had not fought in March—stood like a rock.

If Haig Had Had the Men

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that, if Haig had been given the men needed to restore his divisions to establishment, he would have repulsed the German attacks without difficulty wherever they fell. Furthermore, it seems possible that, even without those reinforcements, he would have held his ground, if he had not been compelled to adopt the reorganisation against which he had so strongly protested.

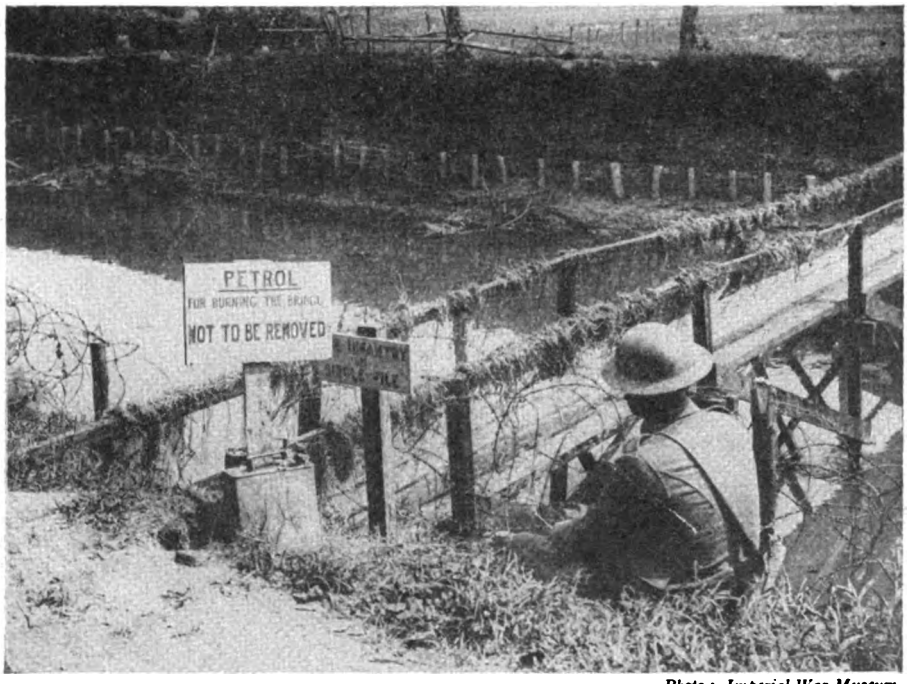

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TOUCH AND GO

How nearly St. Floris was lost is clearly indicated here. A footbridge over the Lys is shown, with two tins of petrol at one end for burning the structure, and a sentry ready to set it alight. The picture is of even later date than the one above, having been taken on May 18th. On the 19th a smart minor action hereabouts resulted in our gaining 30 prisoners and 6 machine guns.

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CHAPTER LXXX

ITALIAN INTERLUDE

The year 1917 was an anxious time for the Allies in the West, nor were their troubles diminished by the disaster that overtook the Italian Army at Caporetto. The consequences of this collapse were serious; any continuance or extension of the débâcle might easily have produced results of a most decisive character. One of the first steps taken to deal with the situation in Italy was the despatch to that front of eleven divisions, five British and six French. It is with the fortunes of the British expedition to the Italian Front that this chapter is mainly concerned.

On October 24th, 1917, took place one of the most decisive of all the land battles of the Great War. Ever since the Italian offensive of summer, 1917, known as the "eleventh" battle of the Isonzo, the German General Staff had been anxious as to the staying-power of Austria. Even though the Italian attacks had come to a standstill, symptoms were not wanting that pointed to a pronounced weakening of Austrian morale and an inclination for Austria to make a separate peace with the Allies.

The German *Fourteenth Army*

To reassert the military supremacy of the Central Powers on the Italian front, and, at the same time, to ease the pressure of the British attacks in Flanders, Germany drew six divisions of selected troops from her slender reserves, and with these, combined with nine picked Austrian divisions, there was formed the German *Fourteenth Army*, commanded by General Otto von Below. With this army forming the spearhead of a new offensive, Germany then struck at the Italian Second Army. The latter had for a long time fought bravely enough on the plateau of the Carso, though without obtaining any decision. Then, to make good the wastage of many months of war, it was reinforced with drafts scraped together chiefly from the munition works and slums of the greater Italian towns.

The morale of these recruits was deplorable; they were, moreover, permeated with "defeatist" propaganda. Small wonder that, when the formidable German fighting force fell upon them by surprise near the village of Caporetto on October 24th, the Italians, after a day's resistance, simply scattered like chaff before the wind. On either side of the breach the Italian armies made a vain effort to stop the rot. All in vain. They were swept away as though by a mountain torrent. The entire Italian line reeled back from the line of the River Isonzo and the lower Alps right away to the River Piave and to the very edge of the plain of Lombardy. For close on a fortnight the fate of Italy seemed trembling in the balance, as her armies streamed back, abandoning vast numbers of prisoners and guns, with endless war material.

Thus does an eye-witness describe this terrible retreat: "It was the first time that I had ever seen the retreat of an army which had been really badly knocked about, and it was a most depressing sight. The infantry were straggling along in a rough column; there was no march discipline; the men looked dispirited, apathetic, sullen, and, above all, dog-tired. They seemed to have hardly any arms and little food. Occasionally a group would fall out and cut up a dead ox by the side of the road, making a hasty meal of raw or half-cooked flesh. Officers seemed scarce, and the few there were appeared no more confident than the men. We passed about fifteen miles of these troops."[1] There is indeed a no more appalling experience for mortal man to undergo than to be caught in the toils of a fleeing army.

Surprised by Their Own Success

Italy was saved for two reasons. First, because the victors, just as happened elsewhere during the Great War, noticeably at Cambrai and during the final Allied advance, were surprised by the very magnitude of their success, and could not drive home their advantage. Secondly, because the Italians found the line of the River Piave a fine and easily defended line of resistance.

Meanwhile, on November 5th a conference of the Allies was hurriedly assembled at Rapallo on the Italian Riviera. This was attended on behalf of Great Britain by Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Henry Wilson and Sir William Robertson. There it was decided that Great Britain should forthwith send a force of five divisions to Italy, while France should send another six.

[1] Barnett, *The 48th Division in Italy.*

Towards the middle of November the five British divisions began to entrain for Italy. The 23rd began to leave France on November 9th; the 41st started on the 12th; the 7th followed one week later; the 48th yet another four days on; the last to move was the 5th, which left on December 1st. Some of the mounted troops marched from the French Riviera as far as Savona; a truly memorable experience for these war-weary men. The accommodation in the familiar waggons (*Hommes* 40—*Chevaux* 8) was not too cramped, and each man had two blankets apiece. The journey to Italy was to occupy six days, and to men whose daily life in the Salient had stamped out all thought of peace and beauty these days came almost as a vision of heaven.

Though it was winter, and the trains crept along as only a French troop-train can, this easy-going progress was never resented. The troops revelled in the long halts when tea was made with water drawn from the locomotive. Even when the train, after a long halt of perhaps hours, started again and left many stragglers behind, nobody much minded; the speed and halts were such that everybody came in by nightfall. So they went on through Dijon and Lyons on to Marseilles: along the Riviera, which seemed a veritable paradise to tortured souls after a sojourn in purgatory. The convalescents, the inhabitants, the visitors, such as there were, vied with each other in lavishing refreshments and cigarettes on the passing troops. As one or two who remembered the arrival of the B.E.F. in France remarked, "It might have been August, 1914, all over again!"

Welcome to the Visitors

In Italy the same welcome greeted the new-comers. The novelty of it all came as a veritable balm to men fresh from Flanders, where they had been surrounded by a suffering and soured population: and the Italians certainly did their best to mitigate the difficulty of

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obtaining supplies which set in as the result of the northern French railways being so heavily taxed by the calls made on them by the Battle of Cambrai. Then came the difficulty of the language. Phrase books were soon at a premium. But the British soldier, in his usual good-humoured fashion, was quite at ease. Not infrequently it was discovered that some Italian soldiers had lived in the United States, and had acquired great fluency in the vernacular of that country. It is said that an immaculate British general officer, after parading his Italian before an Italian General Staff Officer, was staggered at the end of his conversation to be sped on his way by an inimitable, "Waal, so long, Cockie!"

Then there were new food and new drinks. Turkeys at 4/- apiece; ducks, too, and geese. With Christmas at hand, what a treat! "Polenta,"[1] in particular, came to the fore on the daily menu; although it seemed to find favour with most British soldiers, a Scotsman or two ventured to remark that it might be regarded as a poor caricature of the sacred "parritch." The new drinks, too, met with approval: "Vino Nero" or "Vino Rosso," at eightpence a quart, rather more potent than thin Flemish beer! But the men behaved well, and it is officially recorded on more than one occasion that the Italian authorities complimented the British commanders on the conduct and cleanliness of their troops in billets and elsewhere: not but what on one or two occasions the hot-blooded Italians became entangled in a brawl with the British when the latter were roused to a high pitch of excitement by the more potent drink and the flashing eyes of the local beauty.

One thing Thomas Atkins did not take to so kindly, and that was the Italian soldier's ration. When, early in December, 1917, British supplies ran out owing to the railway failures, for two days the British were issued with the Italian army ration: horse meat, macaroni, bread, olive oil, etc. It is rumoured that another forty-eight hours' of that régime would have ended in starvation among the British. Contrariwise, the Italian soldier, and still more the Italian peasant, would gaze round-eyed at what they imagined to be the sumptuous, if indigestible, food supplied to these northern allies.

[1] Polenta is ground Indian corn or maize.

Five British Divisions

The main detraining area was Legnago; some troops actually went as far as Mantua (Mantova in Italian). Thence by strenuous marching they advanced to the River Piave, now the front line. Before the end of the year the forces had been organised into two Corps—the XI Corps, consisting of the 5th and 48th Divisions, to which was added the French 64th Division; the XIV Corps, formed of the 7th, 23rd, and 41st Divisions.

The headquarters of Sir Herbert Plumer, now commanding the British forces in Italy, had been originally fixed at Legnago, but were soon transferred to Padua (Padova in Italian) where they remained to the end.

The right of the new Italian front was formed by the River Piave itself: a tumbled stony river bed 1,000 yards broad, through which meandered the

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN ITALIAN WATERS

The great Battle of Caporetto, which was directly responsible for the despatch of a British force to the Italian Front, was fought on October 24th and 25th, 1917, and was one of the major battles of the War. The Italians were hurled back on as wide a front, and through as great a depth, proportionately to the scale of operations in this theatre, as were the French and British by the Western Front offensives of March and April, 1918. Above we see British troops watering their horses in an Italian river.

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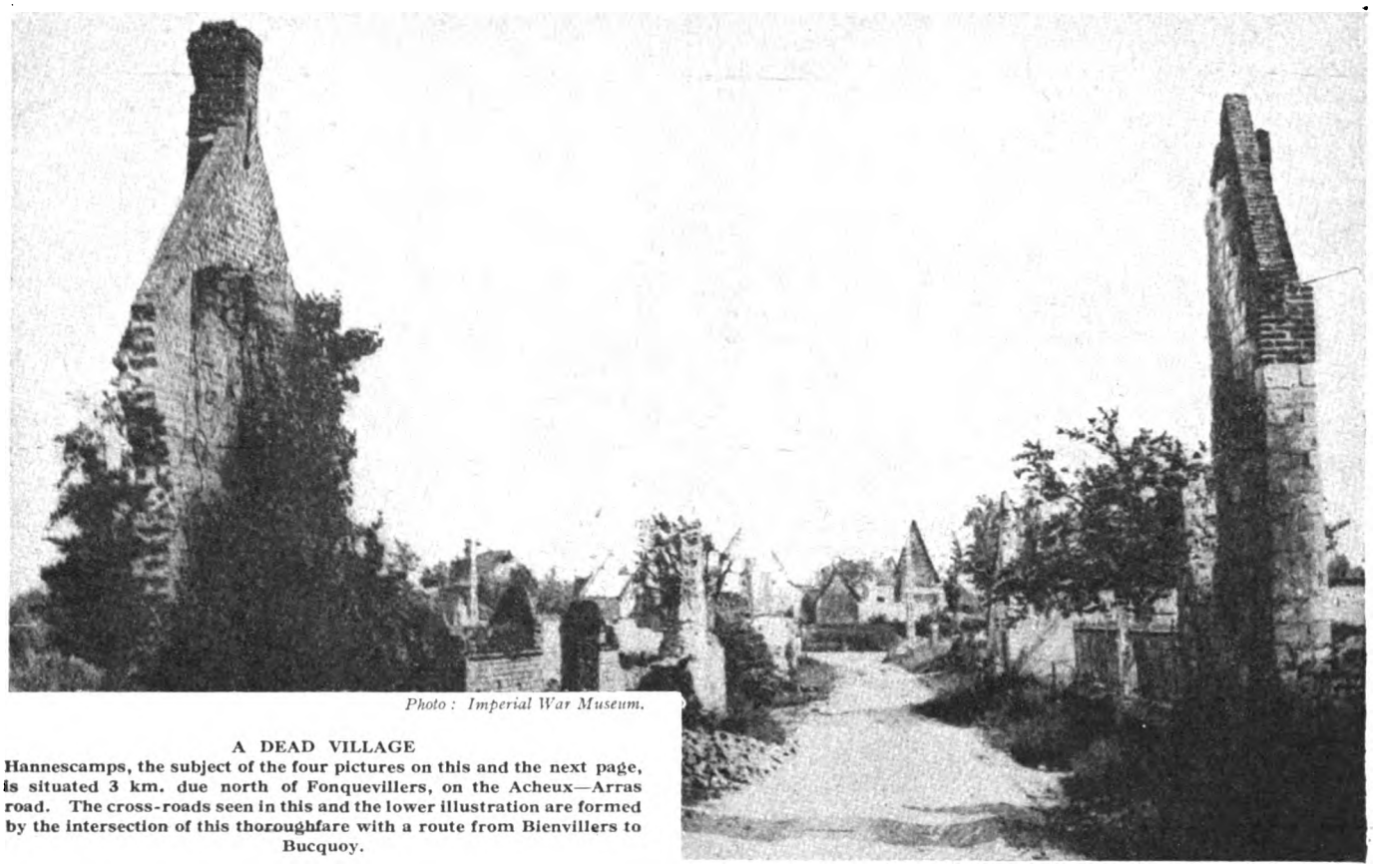

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A DEAD VILLAGE

Hannescamps, the subject of the four pictures on this and the next page, is situated 3 km. due north of Fonquevillers, on the Acheux—Arras road. The cross-roads seen in this and the lower illustration are formed by the intersection of this thoroughfare with a route from Bienvillers to Bucquoy.

SIGNS OF REANIMATION

On and prior to July 1st, 1916, Hannescamps lay about a kilometre inside our lines. It can, therefore, claim no direct concern with the front-line fighting of the Somme battle, nor was it reached by the enemy thrust of March, 1918, though once again it came very near the firing-line.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

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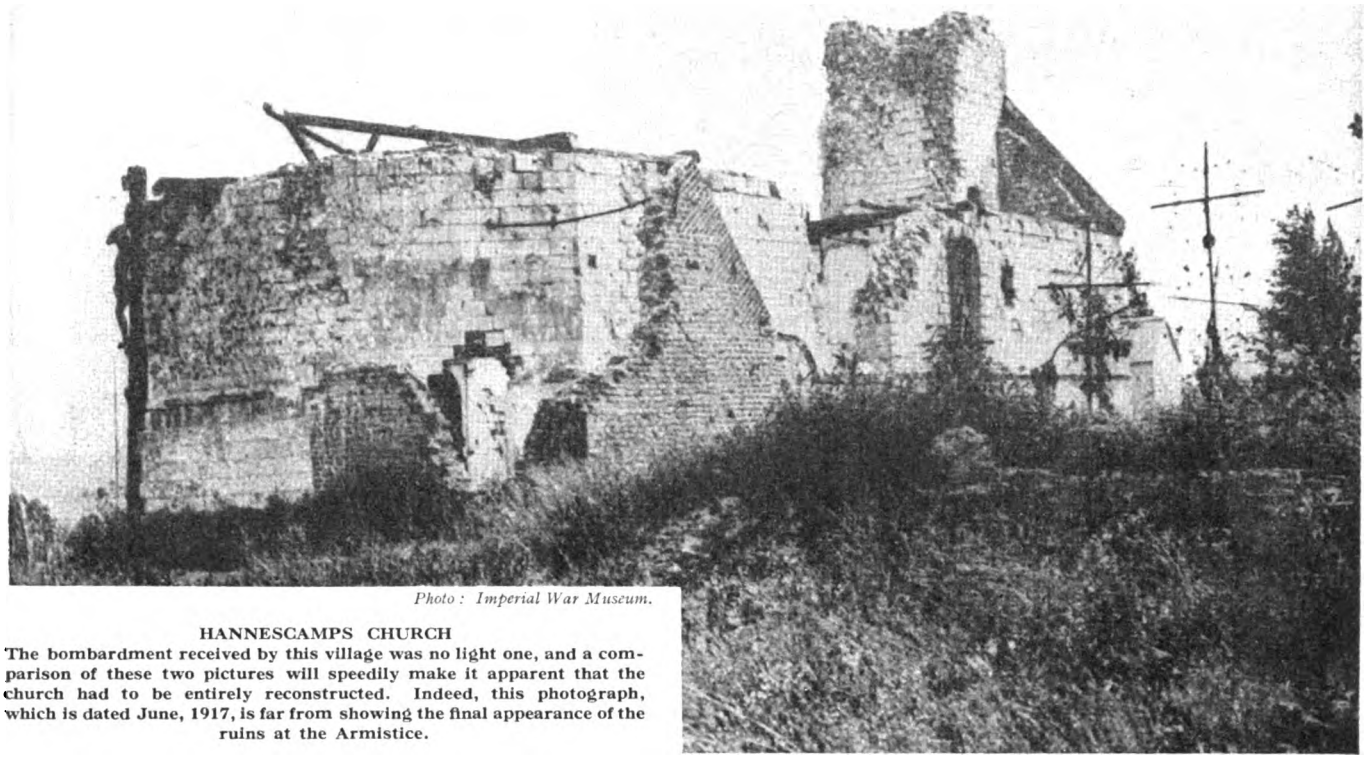
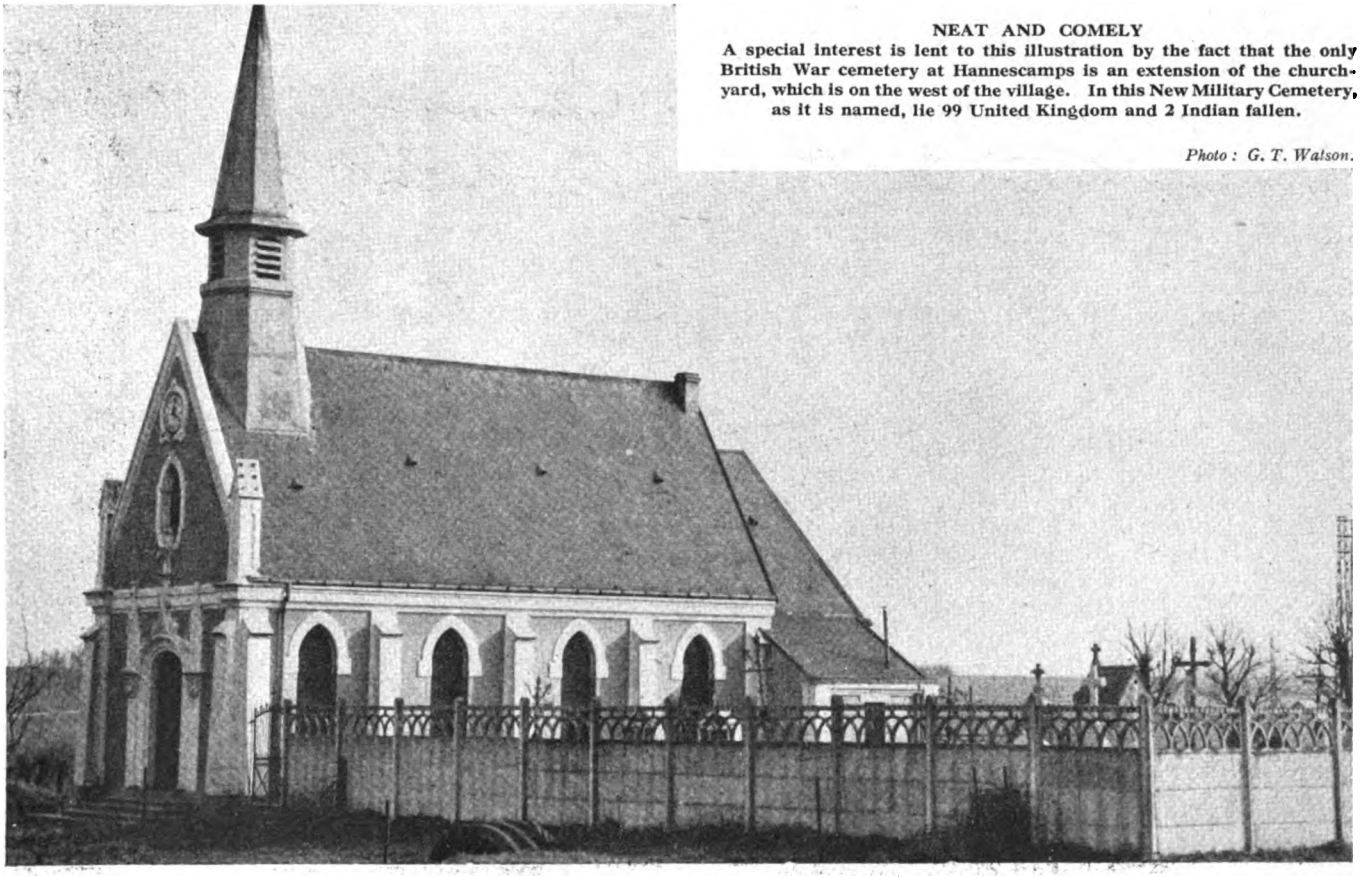


Photo : Imperial War Museum.

HANNESCAMPS CHURCH

The bombardment received by this village was no light one, and a comparison of these two pictures will speedily make it apparent that the church had to be entirely reconstructed. Indeed, this photograph, which is dated June, 1917, is far from showing the final appearance of the ruins at the Armistice.



NEAT AND COMELY

A special interest is lent to this illustration by the fact that the only British War cemetery at Hannescamps is an extension of the churchyard, which is on the west of the village. In this New Military Cemetery, as it is named, lie 99 United Kingdom and 2 Indian fallen.

Photo : G. T. Watson.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

LEARNING TO SKI

Captain Liddell Hart describes the thrust which nearly brought Italy to her knees as that of "a German spearhead on an Austrian shaft." It might be added that the head was somewhat loose on the shaft, for international friction between the commanders of the 6 German and the 9 Austrian divisions participating in the offensive was one of the reasons why the Italians, though they had lost 600,000 men, were able to pull up on the River Piave and form a new line. It was here that the British came to reinforce them. The photograph shows H.A.C. officers and men learning to ski, near the Austro-Italian frontier, toward the close of the campaign.

various rivulets which in the cold season formed the river—icy cold and running, in places, at over twelve miles an hour. It was indeed a formidable barrier. As "No Man's Land" it was rather a change from the muddy stretch lying between the opposing trenches in Flanders. Westwards from the Piave the Italians stretched away along to the Asiago plateau (some 4,000 feet high) as far as the lower end of lake Garda; and it had first been suggested by Sir Herbert Plumer that the British and French should take over the Asiago sector. But it seemed very doubtful whether the new-comers would stand the bitter climate and the snow lying at those heights; neither would they be familiar with the technique of the mountain warfare that was in full swing along the edge of the plateau.

In the end it was arranged that the Italians, who had by now largely recovered from the shocks of their retreat, should continue to hold the Asiago sector. To this Sir Herbert Plumer agreed. The British thus took over the line of the Piave along the ridge known as the "Montello," with the French on their left on the heights of Mount Tomba. Two groups, however, composed of Italian, French, and British divisions, were, for the time being, kept back in rear to deal with any contingency that might be brought about by an enemy break-through. Such was the distribution of the British troops for the winter.

Barely a Sign of War

The ground taken over by the XIV Corps on its arrival on the Montello consisted of some high rocky ridges overlooking the River Piave. As the Italians had retreated to this line only a month before, it presented a strange spectacle to the men coming from the Salient. There was hardly a trace of war. The country, though stony, was cultivated; many vineyards dotted the hillsides. Across the Piave there were but few visible signs of the enemy. The Italians, within the short time of their occupation, had built some thoroughly good trenches in three tiers, which were perhaps old-fashioned in plan, being rather laid out in straight lines. But they were good, for the Italian troops knew how to work, and believed in cover.

Although a certain amount of firing was still in progress along the Piave, the British found that the heavy fighting subsequent to the original action at Caporetto had come to a complete stop with the Italian retreat. The chief symptom of war was aerial activity, particularly at night, which caused some annoyance and quite a few casualties. Matters seemed strangely peaceful to the 5th Division, which had just emerged from the horrors of the mud round Polderhoek Château. The enemy artillery was singularly quiescent, owing probably to the exhaustion of the Austrian ammunition. Indeed, on arriving at the Montello a humorous engineer officer, on finding a large shell crater near divisional headquarters, is rumoured to have surrounded it with a barbed-wire fence decorated with a notice to warn off trespassers.

Later on a somewhat similar notice appeared round the ground used for foot-

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ball matches by the 5th Division back at Visandella, which lay just within observation of the Austrian captive balloons: "It is requested that spectators either lie or sit down in order to minimise enemy observation." This was due to an enemy high-velocity shell having dropped on the edge of the ground during a previous match.

Nevertheless, although it almost seemed to be peace on the Montello, throughout December there was not a little activity on the Asiago front. Indeed, at one moment the situation as a whole appeared to General Plumer to be even critical. Give-and-take fighting occurred with alternating advantage to either side. Of this swinging of the pendulum the troops on the Montello knew nothing. There the conditions remained strangely quiet. Nevertheless, to ease the Italian situation some minor operations were undertaken by both the British and the French. But conditions for such enterprises were not easy. The Piave could not be bridged properly. Some foot-bridges were constructed with difficulty and, to disguise their presence, they were made so as to remain covered by water.

An Enjoyable Winter

The winter went by pleasantly enough. The relief to be far from the Salient was great, and even though there was some strenuous work to be done, moments of relaxation were not infrequent. There was a great revival of smoking concerts and amusements; such as had not been known for a very long time. The well-known 23rd Divisional entertainers, performing under the name of "The Dumps," first gave a remarkably clever revue under the title of "Remember Belgium," the performances of which were attended by numerous highly placed Italian and French officers. To the delight of the audience these spectators, somewhat ignorant of the English language and humour, and thinking it their duty to applaud freely, could be seen clapping the most scurrilous passages of a somewhat "broad" book. More ambitious, "The Dumps" gave a pantomime, "The Babes in Polygon Wood." This proved a roaring success. The hero in this case was a "Knut" christened "Monty" of Montebelluna (the headquarters of the 23rd Division), who sang of himself as follows:

I'm Monty from Montebelluna, the bounder from far Biadene,
I'm the hell of a fellow around the Montello,
The road-hog of road 17.
I'm Prince of the Piave, the pride of my bally platoon. Ah!
The girls of Padova all sigh and turn over
For Monty of Montebelluna![1]

But the foreign visitors to these shows were disappointed in one respect—they had imagined that French and British troops usually went into the field accompanied by a retinue of seductive *vivandières*!

A pack of hounds was extemporised by the artillery; and much amusement was obtained therefrom in hunting hares, though the bag, it is credibly said, was not so large as the huntsmen imagined.

But it was not all play. A considerable amount of entrenching work was carried out, since the uneven ground of the Montello favoured the construction

[1] See Sandilands, *The 23rd Division*, pp. 227–9.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TO THE SKIRL OF THE PIPES

A Highland regiment, with bagpipes playing, marches into a village on the Italian Front. It is little to be doubted that the Scotsman's national instrument evoked wonder among the Italians, as it did among French, Belgians, Greeks, and numerous other races. Yet in reality the pipers were but bringing coals to Newcastle, for it was the ancient Romans who had introduced the pipes into the British Isles. Bagpipes were also popular in Italy in the Middle Ages.

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of good dugouts and every other form of protection. In addition, night patrols were now sent out regularly to worry the Austrian outposts, and attempts were made to cross the Piave. The latter task was one that needed both courage and endurance, for it was, at all times, a dangerous enterprise to traverse the swift icy streams that make up the Piave. Dressed in white as camouflage against a background of snow, and wearing full-length gum-boots, the patrols would attempt to gain the further bank by wading the shallows and crossing the deeps by raft or collapsible boat. Neither was it a single stream that had to be negotiated; on more than one occasion the men might succeed in getting over as many as three streams only to be defeated by the fourth. Lines fitted with grapnels were fired from trench-mortars across the river into the woods, to assist men to cross on rafts; but these experiments also led to little result.

Industrious Austrian Airmen

As the weather grew colder in January and heavy snow fell, all operations grew more and more arduous. By February, on Mount Tomba, where the French divisions lay, there was no less than a foot and a half of snow. Conditions grew so severe that at times all kinds of undertakings nearly came to an end. Yet if the ground operations yielded only negligible results, the same cannot be said in regard to bombing from the air. As the weather proved almost invariably favourable, night flying was continuously indulged in by the Austrian aviators, reinforced by some picked German aircraft. The British G.H.Q. at Padua were so regularly attacked by night that it had to be made a rule for almost the whole personnel to live at a little distance from their daily place of work. Montebelluna, likewise, became distinctly "unhealthy" at night; between February 1st and 6th it was heavily bombed five nights in succession, and on the 6th it was shelled by long-range artillery.

A festive Christmas Day was celebrated by the Allied aviators making a monster raid on the Austrian lines. This was inviting retaliation! And, sure enough, on Boxing Day the enemy returned the compliment. In such reckless fashion did the hostile aviators fly over and drop their bombs—which incidentally caused some heavy damage—as to make it appear that they had quitted some bacchanalian celebration to carry out this raid: an impression that was confirmed when it subsequently became known that the British and Italian aircraft, after rising in pursuit, had shot down no less than eleven of the enemy without the slightest casualty to themselves. There were thus plenty of unpleasant reminders that "a war was still on"; and further to the west of the Montello, the Italian front was at times far from "peaceful."

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AN ALPINE SCENE

A photograph taken in a mountain pass behind a British sector of the Italian Front. Five divisions were despatched to Italy in the last months of 1917, but two of these were returned to France in April, 1918, as a result of the German offensive. Originally under the command of General Plumer, the British force in Italy was in March, 1918, transferred to that of Lord Cavan, General Plumer being recalled to the Western Front.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DOWN AND UP

British cavalry crossing a stream in north-eastern Italy. The rivers and rivulets in that region are numerous: firstly there is the Piave itself, which flows in a rough semicircle from a source in the Alps to the Adriatic 25 miles north-east of Venice; then, successively to the north-east, come the Monticano, the Livenza, and the Tagliamento. South of the Piave—that is, behind the line—the most important rivers are the Sile, the Brenta, and the Bacchiglione.

So the winter went by. By the middle of February it had become clear that the Italian front could be regarded as reasonably secure; that the Italian army was fast recovering from its disasters; and, more important still, that the Germans were withdrawing all their divisions and other auxiliary troops from the Italian front in order to send them northward to France. The British Intelligence at G.H.Q. on the Western Front was now able to establish the fact that twenty-eight fresh German divisions, all brought from the East, in addition to the six which had been recalled from Italy, were massing against the British front in France. It was therefore decided that some of the French and British divisions might return to France from the Montello. Orders were consequently issued for the 41st Division to begin entraining at Mantua on March 2nd for Flanders, where in due course it became heavily involved in meeting Ludendorff's spring offensive.

Change of Command

The 7th Division was warned to follow the 41st, but actually the 5th Division was substituted for the 7th. The 5th did not, as a matter of fact, leave Italy until April 3rd, that is, well after the retreat of the British Fifth Army before the great German attack of March 21st. In the meantime, early in March, Sir Herbert Plumer had already handed over the command of the British troops in Italy to Lord Cavan, in order to return once more to the Ypres Salient, there to make ready to meet the German offensive which was now looming more and more plainly on the horizon.

By early March the melting of the lower snows rendered any crossing of the rising waters of the Piave impracticable; so the hazardous work of the night patrols to harass the Austrians and to obtain identifications came to an end. At the same time it was also decided that the British should leave the Montello for a tour of duty on the Asiago plateau further to the west. By the third week in March the relief of the British by the Italians was completed—not altogether an easy matter, since the Italian organisation, and methods of command and supply, differed greatly from ours; and then there was the eternal difficulty of language.

The British XIV Corps now assumed its place on the Asiago plateau as part of the Sixth Italian Army; and the French came in on the British right. If the change from Flanders to the Mon-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BREASTING THE HEIGHTS

A team of motor-cycle dispatch-riders on one of the Austro-Italian Alpine passes. The Italian engineer is probably the finest road-builder in the world, and the Austrian is little behind him. The recent Abyssinian campaign, whatever one's views on the political or moral issues involved, at least demonstrated once again to the world the *forte* of the attacking race. The above road is typical of the fine highways to be found in the Alps.

tello had been considerable, the mountainous country round Asiago provided a further alteration of surroundings which was even more marked. Rising to a height of 4,000 feet, and densely wooded, this long rocky " plateau " was little more than 5,000 yards in width. As the area was slightly tilted northwards, that is, towards the enemy, the problem of defence was not easy, since there was insufficient room for any system of " elastic " defence, whilst the artillery was severely hampered in its protective duties by forest and rock. A large amount of tree-felling and cutting needed to be undertaken before the guns could find any adequate field of fire. In addition, the field guns had to be provided with reduced charges in order to be able to lob their shell over their own infantry down the steeply-falling front. The ground was in places so bare and rocky that no trenches could be dug, and the infantry constructed carefully camouflaged " sangars," strictly on the pattern of the North-west Frontier of India.

Italian Road-making

In rear of the whole position there extended a tangle of rocky spurs and valleys. At first sight it seemed that access to the plateau might prove impossible, especially towards its eastern extremity. Nevertheless the Italians, with their genius for road-building, had succeeded in constructing several roads to the summit along which their drivers steered their light Fiat lorries at vertiginous speeds round veritable hairpin bends.

Then there came snow! Here was a taste of true mountain warfare, the like of which had never been dreamed of in Flanders. Snowstorms continued and bitter cold prevailed; but wood was plentiful, so that the troops soon grew acclimatised to the harder conditions. Mountain climbing became a regular part of infantry training; whilst the gunners were forced to adopt totally different methods of fire and of tactics. In the end the British troops grew quite skilful in harassing the Austrian outposts.

The month of April was thus spent with but few moments of idleness, for it was a strenuous life—in many respects far more so than in Flanders. Training in these new surroundings soon made such good headway that an Allied offensive, embracing the Asiago front, could be planned, as a relief to the great German thrust in France. But preparations for the movement proved more lengthy than was expected. Not until May 19th were the British ready to make their attack: the three divisions were then

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disposed as follows: the 23rd Division on the right, the 48th to the left, the 7th in reserve. To the right of the British, on the Asiago plateau itself, was the French 23rd Division, reinforced by the French 24th Division.[1]

At this juncture an epidemic of influenza devastated the Allied troops. The 23rd Division was first smitten by this plague, which most fortunately proved to be of a very mild type, even though temporarily it completely incapacitated its victims. By May 25th the entire scheme of operations was abandoned and a less ambitious plan adopted, while some minor operations followed with a view to facilitating the main stroke. But in the meantime the Austrian artillery began to show unwonted signs of activity, and persistent rumours of a coming hostile movement gained ground. Nevertheless, on June 12th orders were issued for the attack on the Austrian lines opposite the Asiago on June 18th. Two days later further information of a coming Austrian attack was obtained. It was no surprise, therefore, that the blow should actually materialise next day.

The Attack is Launched

At 3 a.m. on the 15th a heavy bombardment of the British lines was opened. Gas was plentifully used, and this fact rather led to the belief, which had been fostered by the Italian Intelligence Branch, that no serious infantry assault would follow. Owing to the rocky terrain, the telephone cables had not been placed underground, and so were soon cut to pieces. Dawn broke thick with mist, a typically poor day in the mountains. Once more the attack had the advantage, since the mist impeded both the artillery and machine guns of the defence. Soon after 7 a.m. the hostile infantry emerged from the fog and came on with the greatest gallantry and disregard of loss.

The British fire, however, proved devastating. For three hours the advancing waves, despite desperate efforts to advance, continued to be shot down by the British fire. Nearly everywhere they sacrificed themselves to little purpose. The attack, indeed, might be regarded as having been a complete failure, were it not that at a few points the Austrians effected a deep lodgment in the British front, at points where this might have involved serious consequences owing to the lack of depth in the position on the plateau, as well as owing to the great difficulty that was experienced by the artillery in supporting the defence. The 23rd Division lost a ridge known as San Sisto, the possession of which enabled the Austrians to threaten an enfilade of the whole line. But here Lieutenant-Colonel Hudson, commanding the 11th Sherwood Foresters, displayed not only great gallantry but also consummate skill in handling his reserve. Clearing the greater part of the ridge of the enemy, he undoubtedly saved a nasty reverse. For his brilliant leadership, Hudson received the V.C.

Then by 10 a.m., when visibility had improved and better artillery support became possible, the enemy's progress slowly came to a standstill all along the 23rd Division front, while the attackers still holding on to San Sisto were now isolated. Gradually the situation improved and eventually the enemy abandoned all attempt at making further headway.

The Austrians do Well

Meanwhile the Austrian attack had been doing even better against the 48th Division. The latter had suffered far

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WASHING DAY

The never-pleasant task of washing garments was lighter in at least one respect for the Tommy on the Italian Front than for his colleagues elsewhere, for, as this illustration shows, it sometimes happened that he could avail himself of natural hot springs. On such occasions it only lacked stray cakes of soap among the pebbles, and wild scrubbing-brushes growing amid the reeds, to render the task quite easy.

[1] The British divisions in Italy were at this time still on a 12-battalion establishment.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AN HILARIOUS SCENE

The official caption to this photograph gravely denotes it as showing: "Italian Front. Christmas with the British forces." That, however, seems a mild way of describing this evidently exuberant scene. The task in hand is the plucking of fowls for the Christmas dinner; but the precise nature of the diversions in the foreground is left to the imagination.

more heavily from the epidemic of influenza—to such an extent that its battalions were still weak and far below establishment. The extreme right of the 48th was driven in so far that the enemy captured one 4·5 howitzer battery and caused three 18-pounder batteries to abandon their guns. But the 1/4th Oxford L.I. put up a splendid resistance, and finally were just able to hold up the attack in front of its own battalion headquarters. Yet another break had been effected by the enemy at Perghele, the junction of the flanks of the two brigades which formed the 48th Divisional front. Here the 1/5th Gloucesters and the 5th Royal Warwicks were pushed back and the Austrians, showing considerable tactical skill, were able to break well into the position.

At 9.30 a.m. the situation could even be regarded as critical. But at this juncture the divisional reserve, well led and exploiting all possible advantage of ground, managed to some degree to restore the situation. At length after midday a general counter-attack was launched, but, although it made some progress, it had not regained all the lost ground by nightfall. So, next morning at 4.30, a renewed counter-attack by all available troops was ordered, and by 7 a.m. the whole of the line and all the abandoned guns were recovered. The great Austrian offensive had definitely failed.

The enemy's scheme, in fact, was far too ambitious to hold out any real hope of success. It aimed at distant objectives which lay some miles ahead across most difficult ground. The Austrian High Command had also attempted to attack the entire Allied front, for which task it had insufficient resources, and was expecting the impossible from troops which possessed neither the material and munitions nor the numbers nor the staying-power to carry out such a comprehensive offensive movement. The enemy's left army had, in fact, done far better; here Field-Marshal Boroevic had succeeded in crossing the Piave and overrunning the entire Montello, besides gaining a solid bridgehead further down stream. And it needed one whole week's steady fighting by the Italians to recover these losses. But the attempt to carry the Italian, British, and French lines as far west as Lake Garda at the same time was not within the capacity of the Austrian army of that day. As Field-Marshal Boroevic wrote to a friend on June 29th, 1918, concerning the proposal to attack the British on the 15th, "I opposed it with all my might. I risked my command by writing, 'Don't take the bull by the horns.' All in vain."[1]

Hot Weather, and Raids

This attempt was the last offensive effort on the part of the Austrians. The weather turned extremely warm, and the British forces in Italy were not called

[1] From a private letter quoted in *The Times*. See Sandilands, *The 23rd Division*.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A CORNER IN ASIAGO

Except for the uniform of the soldiers, there is little in the above picture to differentiate it from a view of some dishevelled Western Front village. Asiago is a small town about 50 miles north-west of Venice, and is near the line taken up by the Italians at the close of their precipitate retreat occasioned by the Battle of Caporetto. It changed hands several times during the War.

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upon to participate in any offensive. But it sorely troubled the troops to receive news of the great events coming to pass in France, while they themselves remained inactive. Nevertheless, the defences on the Asiago plateau were strongly reinforced. The Austrian attack on June 15th had revealed too many weaknesses, including lack of dug-outs. The Austrian heavy artillery, which included two 17-inch howitzers, had wrought sad havoc in this respect and still continued to fire spasmodically at the British. The code word " Beetle " may remind survivors of many tense moments during that period. Still, raiding by the British continued, and many prisoners were taken ; the British were well able to deal with the best of the Austrian troops opposite to them, although the Austrian artillery continued to be troublesome at intervals. In August it grew quite active, and the 17-inch howitzers inflicted numerous casualties.

Confidential plans were drawn up by Italian G.H.Q. for a large-scale Allied offensive into the Trentino in August. This, once more, was an ambitious scheme which contemplated an assault on a forty-mile front. The country behind the enemy's lines was difficult in the extreme, so that the whole conception appeared to the troops to be somewhat over-optimistic. Anyhow, the preparations undoubtedly had the result of misleading any enemy agents, of whom some certainly existed behind the Allied front. Then, on September 8th, it was officially announced that the proposed offensive had been cancelled. Thereupon another crop of rumours gained ground : namely, to the effect that the whole British force was shortly to return to France. As a preliminary step the three divisions were brought down from the twelve- to the new nine-battalion establishment. By the middle of September the battalions, now supernumerary to the new establishment, were entraining for France.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

DISTINGUISHED GUN, DISTINGUISHED CREW

The 6-inch howitzer seen here had fired 20,789 rounds when the photograph was taken, and is shown with the survivors of its original crew. Beginning at Messines on June 7th, 1917, it was transferred to the Salient east of Ypres in July. June, 1918, found it on the Asiago plateau, and finally the Austrian armistice found it on the Piave.

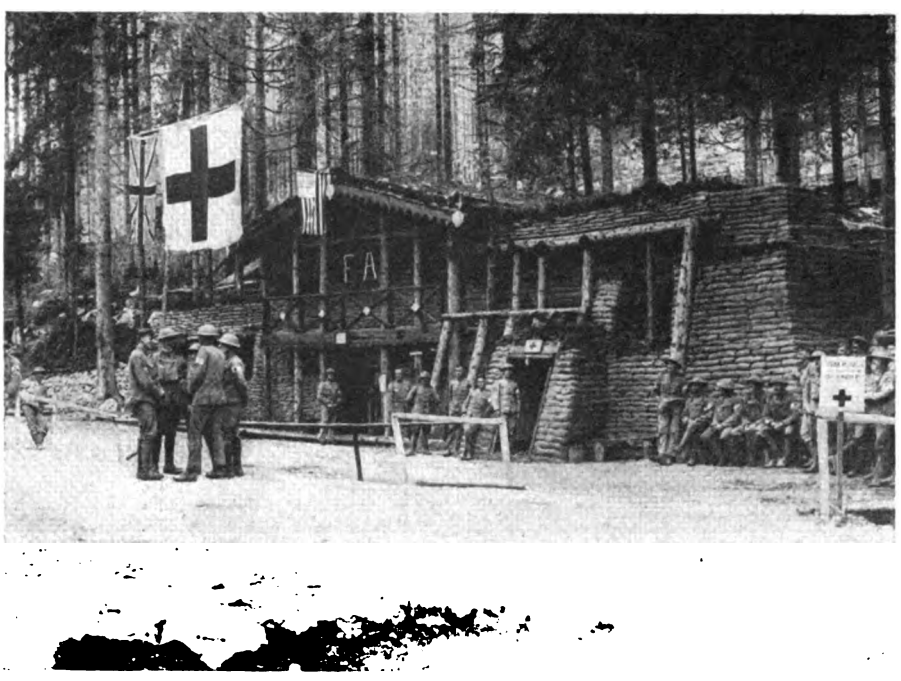

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

A MODEL DRESSING-STATION

A model field-ambulance dressing-station built by the R.A.M.C. near the front line in Italy. Notice the Stars and Stripes over the doorway. There were several American battalions on various parts of the Italian Front by the latter part of 1918 ; one was in the line north-east of Treviso, another at Cattaro, in Dalmatia, and a third at Fiume. Their presence exerted a great moral effect.

A New Anglo-Italian Army

Finally, on October 8th, it was announced that Lord Cavan was to receive the command of a Tenth Italian Army on the lower Piave. This was to be composed of the XI (Italian) Corps and the XIV (British) Corps. General Babington took command of the XIV Corps. The 48th Division, however, was to remain on the Asiago plateau as part of the XII (Italian) Corps. The situation of this last-named division, in spite of the kindness and readiness to help displayed by the Italians, was not easy since it became rather a " no-man's child." Its position grew even more difficult than that of the B.E.F. in France in 1914. But to the troops it was now clear that big things were at hand : so the situation was accepted with good grace, particularly when the 48th Division achieved some striking successes in their raids.

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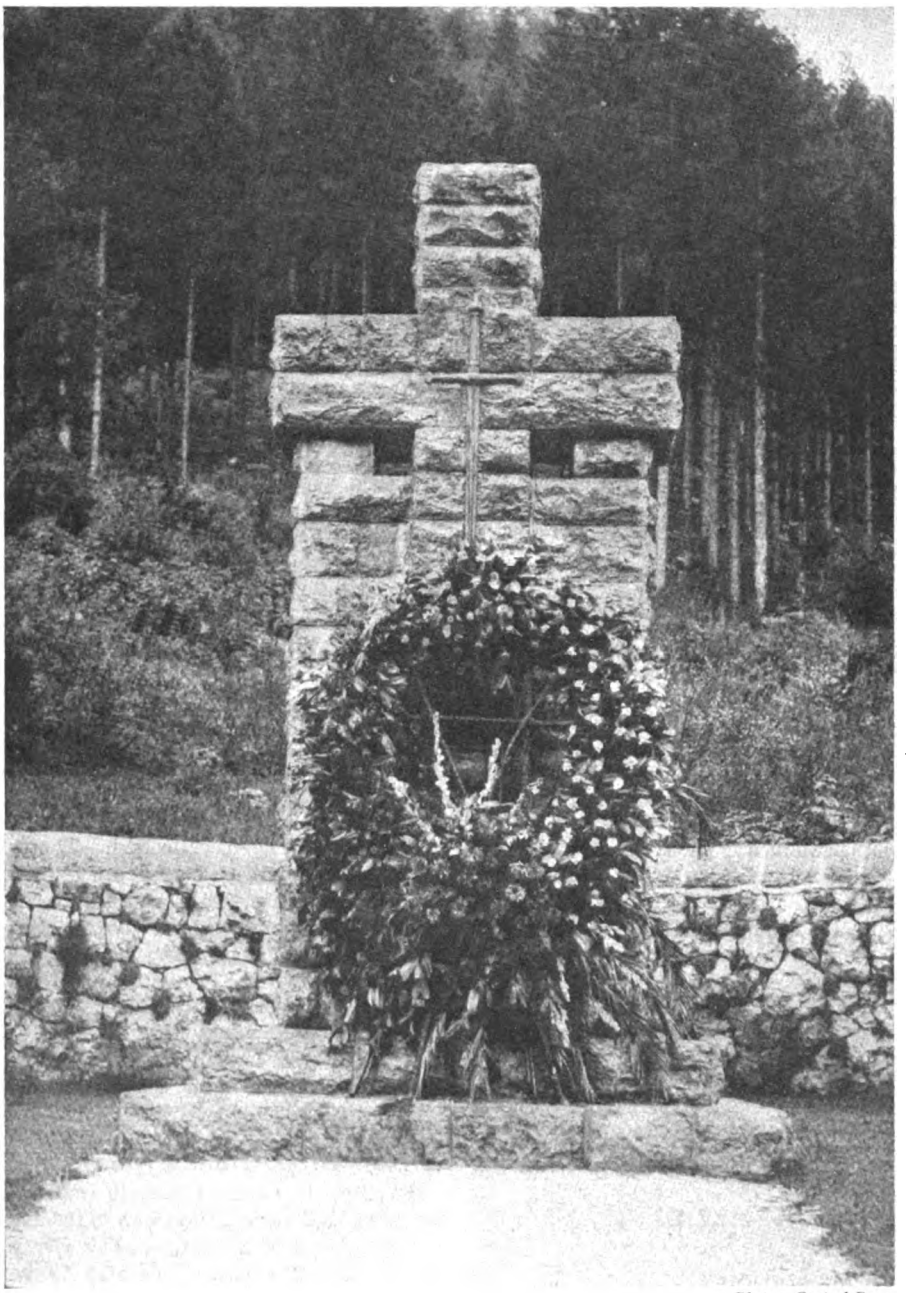

Photo: Central Press.

BARENTHAL CEMETERY, ASIAGO

There are no fewer than 91 burial-grounds in Italy containing the graves of British dead, but the more famous British cemeteries include, in addition to the one illustrated, those of Brindisi, Taranto, Tezze, Giavera, Bordighera, Boscon, Magnaboschi, Dueville, and Montecchio Precalcino. In all, 3,791 dead are commemorated. British troops relieved the Italians in the Asiago sector on March 29th, 1918, and entered the town on October 30th.

Meanwhile the 23rd and 7th Divisions had been moved with the utmost secrecy—which, however, failed to deceive the Austrian Intelligence service—to the lower Piave to the area in front of Treviso. Here Lord Cavan revealed a new scheme of operations to his commanders. The Tenth Army was to force a passage across the Piave. This being accomplished, the Italian Eighth Army would push forward as a wedge into the broken Austrian front, while the Italian Third Army further downstream might then find the crossing rendered somewhat easier. The weight of the attack rested on Lord Cavan's troops. Their task was not light, since the actual crossing of the Piave was a formidable undertaking. Even if successful, the advance of the troops beyond the river might be seriously hampered by the necessary delays for the passage of the river by supplies, reinforcements and the like. On the other hand, the Austrian resistance should be regarded as weakening and might be overcome with far less trouble than could otherwise be expected. Time was pressing and risks must be accepted.

The Island of Papodopoli

In front of the XIV Corps there lay, in the middle of the Piave, an island, three miles long and one mile broad, named the Grave di Papodopoli. It formed a strong outpost of the Austrian main line, which ran along the left bank of the river; and as the Piave formed a far greater obstacle in front than behind the island, its capture constituted an inevitable prelude to any crossing of the whole river at that spot. The problem was now whether to seize the island first as a separate operation, or treat it as part of the whole crossing. The Piave was in flood and, opposite the 7th Division, measured more than one mile and a half from bank to bank: this, of course, included the width of the island of Papodopoli. That island was to be the first objective of the 7th Division.

On October 23rd at 7 p.m. the H.A.C.[1] set out to attempt a crossing of the Piave on to the Grave, which in its execution will remain an example of a feat which has but few counterparts in the annals of the Great War. As a parallel there stands out the crossing of the Tigris at the Shumran bend by the Norfolk Regiment in 1917; but the Tigris was neither as broad nor as swift as the Piave, and the actual difficulties of the Mesopotamian operation were never as great; while on the Italian river the personal risk to the troops was far more pronounced. The H.A.C. may well feel pride in the part that they played in this great undertaking. Nevertheless, full recognition must be paid to the splendid behaviour and skill displayed by the Italian bridging troops, without whom the crossing could never have been effected: the British Royal Engineers had not the local knowledge which alone rendered it possible.

At the last moment it was decided to attack the north-west corner of the Grave di Papodopoli. Three channels had to be crossed, the third of which alone was fordable; while the banks separating the first two channels could only be surmounted by dragging the boats over them. By 11 p.m. three companies of the H.A.C. were safely on the Grave.

The Island Mastered

The 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers followed the H.A.C. across the Piave in several

[1] The 2/1st H.A.C.

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crazy ferry-boats, splendidly managed by the Italian *pontieri* of the Italian 18th Bridging Company. Ably supporting the H.A.C. they assisted materially in clearing the western part of the Grave, on the 24th, a day which was marked by torrential rain. This fact, although it caused the Piave to rise to a level rendering supply work hazardous, certainly prevented the Austrians from reinforcing their troops on the Papodopoli. In the afternoon of the 25th, by dint of strenuous efforts, the remainder of the 22nd Brigade succeeded in reaching the island. During the 26th some stubborn fighting continued until the whole of Papodopoli was held by the 22nd Brigade, in spite of the Austrian artillery fire and the resolute opposition of a picked Hungarian division.

The final crossing to the left bank of the Piave was now timed to begin at 6.45 a.m. on the 27th. The day of the 26th being still and misty, the 23rd Division was able to begin crossing to the island in broad daylight. Throughout the 25th and 26th the R.E. and the Italian *pontieri* had toiled, at extreme risk to themselves, to pass a cable across a stream running at ten miles per hour. When this was at last achieved the work of constructing a bridge could proceed. By nightfall on the 26th, the 20th and 91st Brigades were able to reach the island without a hitch. Fortunately the mist concealed the bridge from the Austrian artillery. At length the 22nd Brigade could be withdrawn to rest, its place being taken by Italian troops. So far not a British gun had fired a shot, even when on the afternoon of the 26th the Austrians heavily shelled the Grave.

At 11 p.m. on the 26th the British bombardment began. To understand its purpose it is necessary to grasp the difficulties that lay in the way of the infantry assault. Between the left bank of the Piave and the Grave di Papodopoli there lay a stretch of 200–300 yards in width, a tangle of water channels intersected by shoals and banks of shingle. Now that the waters had gone down again, the stream was everywhere fordable, although in spots it might be waist-deep. But the currents were swift, and foothold not easy. The river bank itself, called the "Bund," was marked by an embankment 10 feet in height and of some width at the top: this

Photo: Central Press.

TO THE 7TH DIVISION

This division, composed of Regulars, went to France in October, 1914, after which its many engagements included Antwerp and "First Ypres" (1914); Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Festubert, and Loos (1915); "First Somme" (1916); the Ancre, Bullecourt, the Hindenburg Line, and "Third Ypres" (1917). In November, 1917, the division went to Italy, where it served until the Armistice, participating in the Battle of the Piave and in the passage of the Monticano. Its memorial is at Maserada, a small village close to the Piave, and opposite the Grave di Papodopoli.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN FULL WAR-PAINT

A camouflaged gun belonging to the 293rd Siege Battery on the Italian Front. One of the greatest problems confronting the Italians for some months after Caporetto was the shortage of artillery occasioned by their huge losses in guns during the Austro-German advance; and the British and French reinforcements in this arm were therefore most welcome.

stood at 100 to 200 yards from the edge of the last water channel. This formed a ready-made fortification and was now covered by a thick belt of wire. It was a formidable task, indeed, to cross those 400 yards, one that in the face of the German army of 1916 would have been hopeless and not to be attempted.

Showing 'em How

Nevertheless the 7th and 23rd Divisions had by now obtained the full measure of their enemy, and to attempt the seemingly impossible was to them but an opportunity to show the British armies in France what they, too, would dare to do. At 6.45 a.m., while it was still dark, the troops began to move and the final barrage opened, thin enough in all conscience—for there was but one 18-pounder gun per 75 yards along the actual front of assault. At length the crossing began: "In darkness, bitter cold and heavy rain the troops moved forward—officers led their commands by compass bearing. It is no light task, even in broad daylight and without interference, for a heavily equipped man to ford an unknown river; cool heads and stout hearts were needed if this was to be accomplished in darkness, and in the teeth of the artillery and machine-gun fire which now opposed the advance. Fording the swift current of the channels, waist-deep, men linked arms to safeguard their passage; but several were swept from their feet and drowned. It was a desperate venture; but the fine leading of the officers and the steadiness of their men assembled the 68th and 69th Brigades for attack on the far bank of the Piave. The timing had been perfect. There had been no rush, no confusion. The troops quietly deployed in rear of the artillery barrage and awaited the moment of assault."[1]

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

OBSERVERS AT WORK

The scene at an artillery observation-post in the hills on the Austro-Italian frontier. The Austro-German claims after Caporetto were certainly staggering: the battle was fought on October 24th; by the time the Italians had been driven back on the Piave, a fortnight later, their losses in guns were given as 2,300, and in prisoners a quarter-of-a-million!

At last they all got over, encountering difficulties that varied from place to place. The 22nd Manchesters found the passage most arduous, the water being nearly 4 feet deep. Linking arms, the men formed a chain and struggled over. The Gordons did the same in a raging current. Finding gaps in the wire, cutting and hacking at it where the guns had not had time to destroy it, the troops stormed the "Bund" in a fashion that might have been reminiscent of the rush over the Egyptian earthworks at Tel-el-Kebir in 1882. The Lewis gunners did magnificent work in covering the assaulting troops. The Austrians, utterly surprised by the failure of the wire to hold up the assault, soon lost heart and the "Bund" was in British hands before 8 a.m. Gradually the two British divisions went forward, until at evening nearly all the objectives for the day's advance were in their hands. In six hours the British had forced the Piave and advanced 3,000 yards beyond the river.

Strongly-held Farms

The chief difficulties that were now encountered beyond the river arose from

[1] Sandilands, *The 23rd Division*, p. 309.

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two causes. The first was brought about by the resistance of the farms that lay dotted about the area of the advance. Several of these did not figure on any available map, while their situation did not bring them under any line of the artillery barrage. They had to be taken one by one: fortunately there was not a single "pill-box" of the German type. The second difficulty was the congestion of traffic on the Piave bridge, of which three bays were, at one moment, carried away and could be repaired, only after the loss of much valuable time, by the devoted efforts of the 528th Field Company, once more admirably assisted by the Italian *pontieri*.

The fighting of the British now merges into the tale of the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, and the work of the British troops is swallowed up in the further advance of the far more numerous Italian armies. But let it never be forgotten that without the crossing of the Piave by the 7th and 23rd Divisions such a battle as Vittorio Veneto might never have taken place. Just as in September, 1914, British troops were the first to cross the River Marne, and, again, the River Aisne, so in October, 1918, they were the first to cross the Piave. A few days later the British, too, were to be the first to step on to Bulgarian soil. Whatever may be said elsewhere of such a record, these facts have never been forgotten by the German historians of the War. What greater compliment could be paid to our troops than that acknowledgment to the effect that in the British soldier the German army had found a fighting man equal to its own?

The story of Vittorio is soon told.

On October 28th the general Allied advance began. The opposition steadily went on weakening. But the progress of the 23rd Division was seriously retarded by the River Monticano. At length this was overcome. Then the 7th Division also took six hours to oust the Austrians from the village of Cimetta, which was stubbornly defended. The next three days saw a slow methodical advance, until on the night of the 31st the Tenth Army stood on the line of the River Livenza. By this time supply difficulties were being experienced, for the bridge at the Grave di Papodopoli was totally inadequate to carry the traffic of the advancing Italian armies.

A Horrible Picture

On November 2nd the Tenth Army began to advance on to the River Tagliamento; the Italian XI Corps on the right, the British XIV Corps in the centre, and the Italian XVIII Corps on the left. By now the Allied aircraft were busily engaged in pursuing the retreating Austrians. "The sights on the Pordenone road moved the victorious British troops to horror and to pity; to the weary, half-starved enemy, whose disorganised masses had blackened the broad high-road during the past few

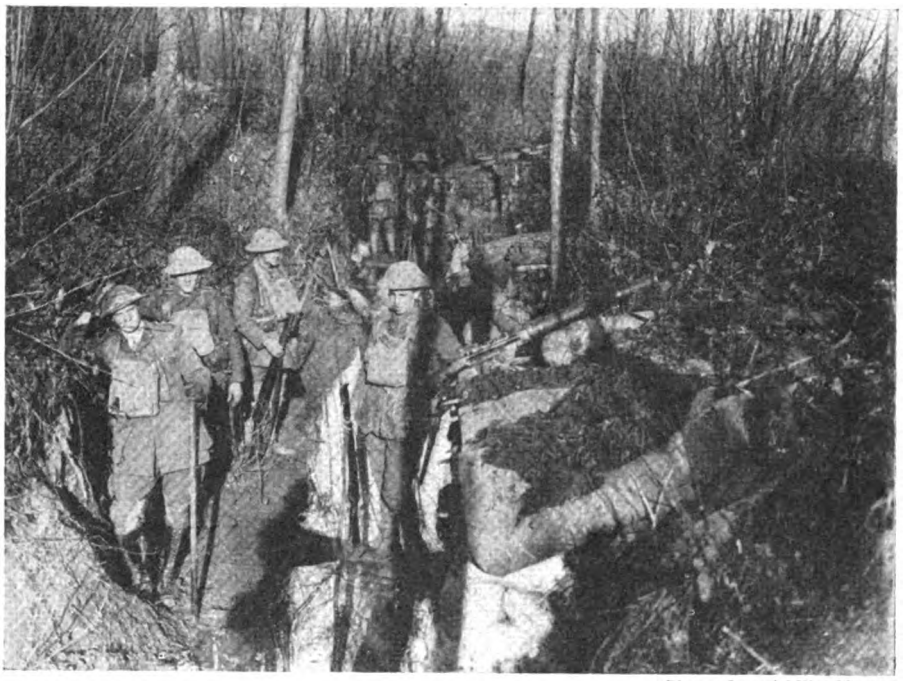

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A BRITISH TRENCH

The total number of British forces employed in Italy was approximately 101,000 combatant and 44,000 non-combatant troops, although the maximum strength at any one moment was never much more than 90,000 combatant troops. Above is a British trench among the hills—as distinct from mountains—suffering somewhat from flooding.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DUG-OUTS ON THE MONTELLO

A wonderful system of British dug-outs on the Montello spur between the Piave and Brentella rivers. The Austrians gained part of the crest here on June 16th, 1918, but were repulsed, after furious fighting, on the 20th. The height was wholly recovered by the Italians on the 23rd, but they did not cross the Piave in this region until October 28th.

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days, the vision of the fate which might at any moment visit them must have brought a terror which eclipsed even the bitterness of defeat. For mile after mile was flanked with wreckage of troops and transport, shattered guns and wagons, the mangled remains of drivers intermingled with those of the horses, corpses of infantrymen riddled by machine-gun fire." [1]

The delay on November 1st had enabled the Austrians to get back in rear of the Tagliamento, and the Tenth Army did not regain touch with the enemy until the next day. By the afternoon of November 3rd the Tagliamento was crossed and bridge-heads secured. Everywhere the whole of the Italian armies were on the move, carrying all before them. On that afternoon an armistice was signed to come into force on the following day.

It still remains necessary to recount the experiences of the 48th Division on the Asiago Plateau during these momentous days. From reports received from patrols beginning on October 24th, it was clear that the enemy was meditating a withdrawal to a back line. Accordingly on October 30th the 48th Division and the French 24th Division both proceeded to raid the Austrian position on a large scale and to a depth hitherto not dreamed of.

The End of Austria

These raids were remarkably successful. On the next day it was proposed to exploit that success, and the Italian 20th Division on the left of the British 48th expressed the intention of joining in the forward drive. At dawn on November 2nd the Allied advance took place, and the British reached Porrechie d'Avanti—promptly christened "Porridge Corner" by the British soldier. By this time such a state of rot had set in amongst the enemy that not even rudimentary precautions were being taken by him either to block roads or in any way to obstruct the advance. Through most intricate country the movement continued throughout that day, and was again resumed at daybreak on the 3rd.

At 9 a.m., at Osteria del Termine, the Austrian General Ritter von Romer, himself badly wounded, came in under a white flag to inform Major-General H. B. Walker that an armistice had been signed at 3 a.m. that morning, and that the Third Austro-Hungarian Army outside a specified area wished to withdraw. Such a kaleidoscopic change, all brought about in five days, seemed almost incredible. Great was the rejoicing in the division: a commemorative dinner was at once organised by divisional headquarters, at which a newly arrived large crate of carrier pigeons, being emblems of peace, were incontinently killed to make up for the lack of other viands on this memorable occasion.

Thus ended the Great War in Italy. Although few in numbers, and although participating in only two important battles,[1] the British and French divisions dispatched to Italy in 1917 had rendered great service to the Allied cause. The moral support thereby afforded to the Italian Army, and still more to the Italian people, was alone a result of vital importance.

It is true that the Italians had succeeded in stabilising their front before any Allied troops had reached it. That event, however, was in great measure due to the inability of the Austro-Germans to pursue the Italian armies beyond their new line.

When the Allies arrived, they found the Italian troops—or at least a very large proportion of them—still in a "jumpy" state. The Italians had lost a huge quantity of guns and material, which must be replaced before they could withstand any truly serious attack. So long as any such risk existed, just so long was it wise to maintain French and British troops in Italy.

Even when these risks began to disappear, new feelings of common interest had sprung up, which rendered desirable the maintenance of a representative French and British force in the country. It was a sore trial to such fine fighting divisions as the 7th, 23rd, and 48th, not to be alongside their fellows in France during the last autumn of the War.

Perhaps the triumph of Papodopoli consoled them to a great extent for their enforced absence from the Western Front.

[1] Sandilands, *The 23rd Division*, p. 330.

[1] Asiago in June, the Piave in October, 1918.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRINGING BACK PRISONERS

Highlanders bringing back prisoners across a pontoon-bridge over the wide Piave river. During the operations of late October, 1918, British and Italians shared the honours in the matter of captures. By the evening of the 27th the former had taken 3,520 prisoners on the Piave front, the Italians 2,100. Progress, however, was far from smooth for the Allies, and the Italian VIII Corps was particularly unfortunate in failing to establish its bridges across the river. Victory, on this front as elsewhere, was not to be had for a song.

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CHAPTER LXXXI

ARMY, CORPS, AND DIVISIONAL "SIGNS"

The plates that appear earlier in this work relating to Divisional "Signs" are not, perhaps, the least interesting feature to readers of TWENTY YEARS AFTER. *The author of the following chapter has made of those "signs" a particular study, and he may be described as the leading authority on the subject. Some years ago he prepared a book dealing with the various "signs," and even then experienced great difficulty in obtaining accurate details. Since his book was published he has been able, through the help of readers, to check a great deal of his earlier data, with the result that the information given here, the result of some years of patient research, may be taken as reasonably authoritative.*

"Olim meminisse juvabit."

To one who is a keen student of Heraldry, it was perhaps inevitable that in the "Signs" used by our corps and divisions during the four unforgettable years of the Great War would be found a subject of the greatest interest.

History Repeating Itself

Heraldic devices had their origin in warfare, and here was history repeating itself in the badges worn by the fighting men of the greatest army our Empire has ever known.

What, after all, is the "Sign" of the Fifth Division but the famous "Azure, a bend or," for the right to use which Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor engaged in single combat in 1390?

There is not the least doubt that the "Sign" was a great aid in the creation of a divisional *esprit-de-corps*. Reinforcements were at one time being drafted indiscriminately to units, and this practice did not help to foster regimental tradition or regimental spirit; in fact, the contrary effect was sometimes felt. In such cases men were inclined to think more of the division (particularly if it was a good one) than of the unit, and the "Sign" which all wore as a badge tended to unite them as the visible mark which distinguished them. It was the same idea which had existed in mediæval times, when the distinguishing badge of the *Condotta* or "Free Company" helped to bind together the professional soldiers who composed it.

The formation of a complete collection of the "Signs" was not too difficult a task—it needed pertinacity more than anything else—but to ferret out in every case the origin or history was quite a different matter. However, with the help of the Battle Order of the Army, which gave the names of all the corps and divisional commanders, the job was started; and with the assistance of a large number of general officers, who went to unending trouble in the matter, it was possible to find out from authoritative sources the reasons which had governed the selection of those "Signs" which had a definite reason for their adoption.

The reason for the "Sign" was the necessity of having some means of recognising immediately the transport and personnel of the division. They were supposed to be secret. G.R.O. 2463 said, ". . . Distinguishing Signs which have been adopted by units and formations, and the signs authorised for certain transport vehicles, are secret, and must not be disclosed in correspondence." G.R.O. 3043 laid it down that "any signs which may be taken into use as distinctive marks on vehicles are secret. They must not be reproduced for unofficial purposes, nor may their meaning be disclosed to unauthorised persons." But if some of them were intended to mystify the enemy, they must have failed signally in their purpose!

Different Types of "Sign"

The "Signs" could be divided into several groups. There was the type meant purely as a distinguishing-mark, easy to draw. A typical example of this was the circle and cross of the 3rd Division. There was the "cypher" or "monogram" type, such as the LXI of the 61st Division.

Then there was the "territorial" type, so to speak, when a badge representing the territory from which the division came was used. The shamrock of the 16th and the red rose of the 55th Divisions are illustrative of this.

Again, some divisions had "Battle Honours," such as the key of the 75th Division. There was what may be called the "heraldic" group, where a portion of the armorial bearings of the commander was used—for example, the horn of the VIII Corps and the Wilkinson crest of the 50th Division.

Finally, there was the "rebus" or pun upon the name of the commander, possibly the best known of all being the three question marks of Watts's XIX Corps.

The five Armies had "Signs." The First had a white line painted down the back of its vehicles. The Second Army transport used the armlet of red, black, and red, with the Roman "II" thereon. The Third had the same Army brassard with a bull's-eye in the centre—an allusion to the sobriquets of Byng and Allenby. The Fourth had a boar's head—an allusion to a visit paid by General Rawlinson to a boar forest. "Rawly," the army pet boar, who afterwards lived in the Zoo, will be remembered. In General Gough's time the Fifth Army had a red fox for its "Sign," but when General Birdwood took it over, it reverted to the Army brassard with a five-pointed red star in the black stripe.

The Cavalry Corps started with a female head in a picture hat for its "Sign." Whether the lady was considered too frivolous a subject, or whether her morals were suspected as doubtful, is not known, but St. George and the Dragon—the former the patron saint of the cavalryman—displaced the head!

The Infantry Corps "Signs"

The I Corps had the letter "A" with the figure 1 by it; the II the usual Corps armlet—red with a white stripe in the centre—charged with a red, six-pointed star. The III had an equilateral triangle, the sides being red and white, and the base black—the

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MISERY IN MISERY

This, to many English minds the most aptly-named village on the Somme, is situated about 6 km. north-east of Chaulnes, and 3 km. south of the Amiens—St. Quentin highway. It is sandwiched between the Péronne—Roye and Péronne—Nesle roads, and is on the Péronne—Amiens, or Péronne—Montdidier, railway. Our photograph shows its ruined church on July 15th, 1917. For some time previously, the village had housed the headquarters of the IV Brigade R.F.C. It had been in German hands until the retirement of early 1917.

racing colours of the Commander, Sir William Pulteney. The IV started with the figure " 4 " in the white stripe of the armlet, but when the order forbidding the numbers to be shown was issued, a black patch was placed over the figure. A white five-pointed star stood for the V Corps, and a bulldog for the VI. Then came the " snowy " polar bear and seven stars of Ursa Major for the VII, an allusion to the nickname and name of the G.O.C., Sir Thomas D'O. Snow. The hunter's horn of Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston marked the VIII, and the bow and arrow from Sir Alexander Hamilton-Gordon's crest the IX.

The X Corps simply kept the red and white brassard unadorned, while the XI had an eleven-pointed star in gold, in the centre of which was a red disc with a white cross, taken from the Corps flag. The XII had two interlaced horseshoes, placed back to back, the left one being white and the other red, " C.C. for Congreve's Corps and Good Luck." The XIV was known by a chequer of blue and white, most probably taken from the International Signal Code flag for " N," fourteenth letter of the alphabet. The XV used the letter " Y," supposed to represent three " V's " for fifteen. The XVI Corps never used a " Sign." The XVII had an oblong of green and white halves, with the green on top.

The " Sign " of the XVIII, with its crossed axes and initial " M " for Maxse's, was a pun on Sir Ivor's name. The three white question-marks of the XIX referred, as has been stated, to Lieutenant-General Watts. The XX had a pyramid with a scarab underneath it, the former having " XX " engraved near its base. A four-leaved green shamrock marked the XXI Corps—three of its leaves had the veins designed like the Roman VII in white (three sevens for twenty-one) with the word " Corps " on the fourth leaf. And the XXII Corps could be recognised by its foxhound.

Coming to the Divisional " Signs," the 1st Cavalry Division used a white oblong with a vertical red stripe painted down the centre. Two horseshoes were adopted by the 2nd Cavalry Division: the left one was painted white, the other—which overlapped it—red. The first signs painted had the shoes with their points downward, but this position was soon reversed in accordance with the tradition that if a horseshoe is hung upside down the luck will run out of the ends! Three white horseshoes, pointed upward, was the badge of the 3rd Cavalry Division.

The Guards' Famous " Eye "

Clear, unmistakable, and unforgettable was the famous " eye " of the Guards Division. It was placed in a shield-shaped design of dark blue edged

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with gold, with a further border of scarlet also edged with gold. The colours of the Household Brigade are the royal colours of red and blue. The attached troops of the division wore small cloth shields of different colours according to the units, each shield bearing the initial letter "G," in gold thread for officers and in brass letters for the other ranks.

The 1st Division adopted the old marine signal for the word "one," a blue triangular flag bearing a white disc and having a border of white. The black oval of the 2nd Division was charged with three eight-pointed stars—a large red one between two smaller white ones. The latter stood for the division, the red central star for the First Corps.

The 3rd Division's "Sign" has been mentioned above—the circle and cross. It was never actually laid down whether the cross went over the circle or under it. Major-General Sir William Lambton, who commanded the 4th Division at the time, utilised his family crest of the ram's head for its device. This was cut out in outline of cloth of various colours when worn by the personnel, and was stencilled in different colours on the transport vehicles. A peculiar feature of some of the stencil designs was that the ram had no eyes!

In obedience to the order prohibiting the use of numbers or names on vehicles, the 5th Division painted a yellow diagonal bar across such marks. Eventually a square blue background was added.

The "Signs" of the 6th and 7th Divisions were not dissimilar, and men have been known to confuse the two badges. The 6th used a white ring on a black square, the 7th a white bull's-eye disc on a black ground. Neither "Sign" had any history, nor had that of the 8th Division, a red square within a white one.

The thistle of the 9th (Scottish) Division needs no comment. The personnel wore it in white metal on a circular background of blue cloth. The 10th (Irish) Division was known by the narrow green stripe worn by all ranks on the shoulder strap. When a Divisional "Sign" was called for, this emerald green stripe was adopted in the form of a horizontal bar about ten inches long by three inches deep painted on the transport.

A Puzzle from Egypt

Much speculation existed as to what the real origin of the 11th (Northern) Division's "Sign" was. The formation was in Egypt when the badge was taken into use, and the distinctive "key-hole" sign was held by many to be the "Ankus, or Sign of Life," and that, in order to make it more distinctive, the base had been made wider than in the conventional pattern.

Although the ace of spades of the 12th (Eastern) Division had no history apart from its distinctiveness, it was one of the best known in the B.E.F. Our French allies regarded it with some suspicion, for a similar device was used by their Penal Battalions. The Ace of Spades road-houses on the Great West Road and the Kingston By-pass are part-owned by a past member of the Division.

The 13th (Western) Division, originally (like several others) nicknamed the "Iron" Division, had an iron horseshoe, points upward, "for luck."

A green oblong for the Light Division, crossed by two white lines, one diagonal, the other horizontal, marked the 14th. The origin of this is wrapped in mystery (some people who did not know their Euclid tried to make out that it was the

Photo: G. T. Watson.

MISERY MISSING FROM MISÉRY

But Miséry, one presumes, is not missing its misery. . . . The 150th Brigade, 8th Division, operating in close conjunction with the 24th Brigade, fell back on to a position covering the village during the morning of March 25th, 1918. About 5 p.m. the brigade was ordered to retire to the line of the railway west of Miséry. Some of the last British troops in the village were the 1st Sherwood Foresters, who, having become cut off from their brigade, rushed the enemy as he was about to take possession of the ruins, and, carrying their wounded with them, got through to the new British line.

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Fourteenth Proposition of the First Book!).

The 15th (Scottish) Division used a red triangle within a black circle. A reason given for this was that "O" is the fifteenth letter of the alphabet, while the triangle represented the wedge or "scotch" used for putting under waggon wheels to prevent the vehicles from running downhill. This does not seem too good, for "Scotch" in place of "Scottish" would not be appreciated by your true Caledonian.

The 16th (Irish) Division was known by the green shamrock worn by the officers and men, and the monogram "L.P." in green on the transport. The latter was a compliment to its first commander, Major-General Sir Lawrence Parsons, and when Major-General Sir William Hickie adopted these "Signs" in the early days of 1917, he also selected for the division the motto of the Irish Brigade which fought in France in the Eighteenth Century, "Everywhere and always Faithful."

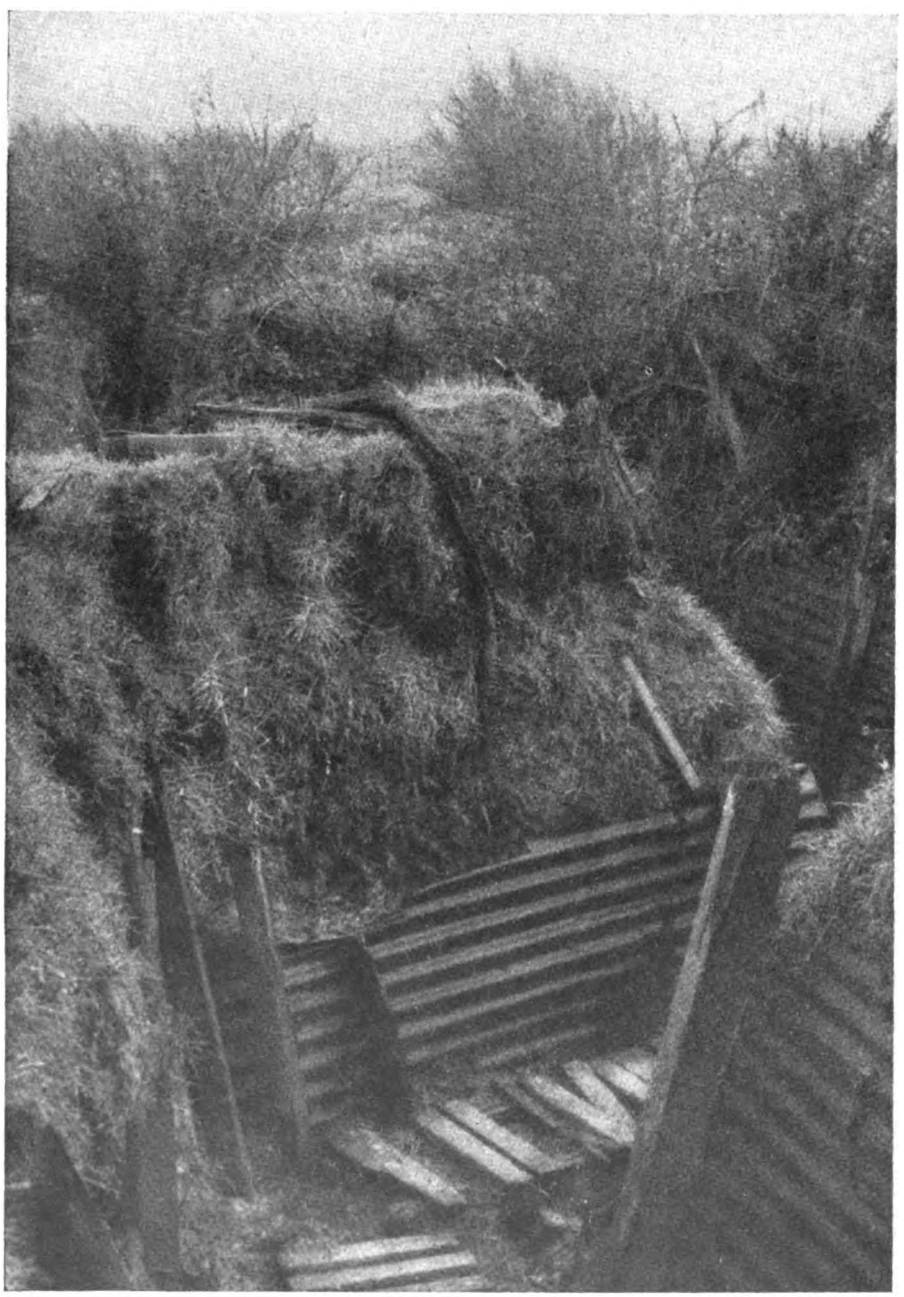

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ON HILL 62

On page 1317 we showed an authentic survivor, on Hill 60, of the British trenches of the War, and observed that there alone, except on Hill 62 and at Beaumont-Hamel, did it seem possible nowadays to find such genuine relics. Here is one of the trenches on Hill 62. This hill is situated south of Ypres, being about 1,000 yards south of Wytschaete and 200 yards north of L'Enfer Wood.

Alternative Explanations

The original Supply Column of the 17th (Northern) Division was Australian, and the dot and dash of the Morse Code "A" was adopted. This was the origin of the "Sign," although many believed that it represented the tops of the figures in "17." As a rule, the dot and dash were shown in red.

Major-General Sir Ivor Maxse introduced the punning "A.T.N." for the 18th (Eastern) Division, and this was a well-known, if rather evident, "Sign."

The butterfly of the 19th (Western) Division was invented by Major-General G. M. T. Bridges, and this was another tremendously distinctive "Sign." It had no particular origin. Some people thought that the insect stood for the "Light" Division, but the 19th was not a "Light" Division at all.

The 20th, however, *was* a "Light" Division, but its "Sign" had no history. It was a white bull's-eye charged with a black cross, which bore in its centre a bull's-eye in red.

Lieutenant-Colonel Clifford Coffin, V.C., D.S.O., invented the "three sevens for twenty-one" of the 21st Division, and there was no mistaking this peculiar device, not unlike the badge of the Isle of Man.

The 22nd Division was known by the narrow strip of black braid which was worn by all ranks on the shoulder straps.

The "Maltese cross inside the circle" of the 23rd Division seems to have had no origin apart from its simplicity. Several explanations have been put forward to account for it, but none of them seemed to fit, and, also, those in authority were all in the dark about it.

The device of the 24th Division, with its squares and triangles, was constructed for simplicity, but it did look a little complicated, and can hardly be described adequately.

The 25th Division had two "Signs." The personnel wore a red cloth horse-shoe, with its points upward, on the back, just below the collar, and the transport vehicles had a red and white chequer design of squares and oblongs.

The 26th Division was known by a blue bar, the 27th by a yellow (sometimes even a puttee string!), and the 28th by a red bar, all on the base of the shoulder-straps. This shoulder-strap idea was to distinguish the four

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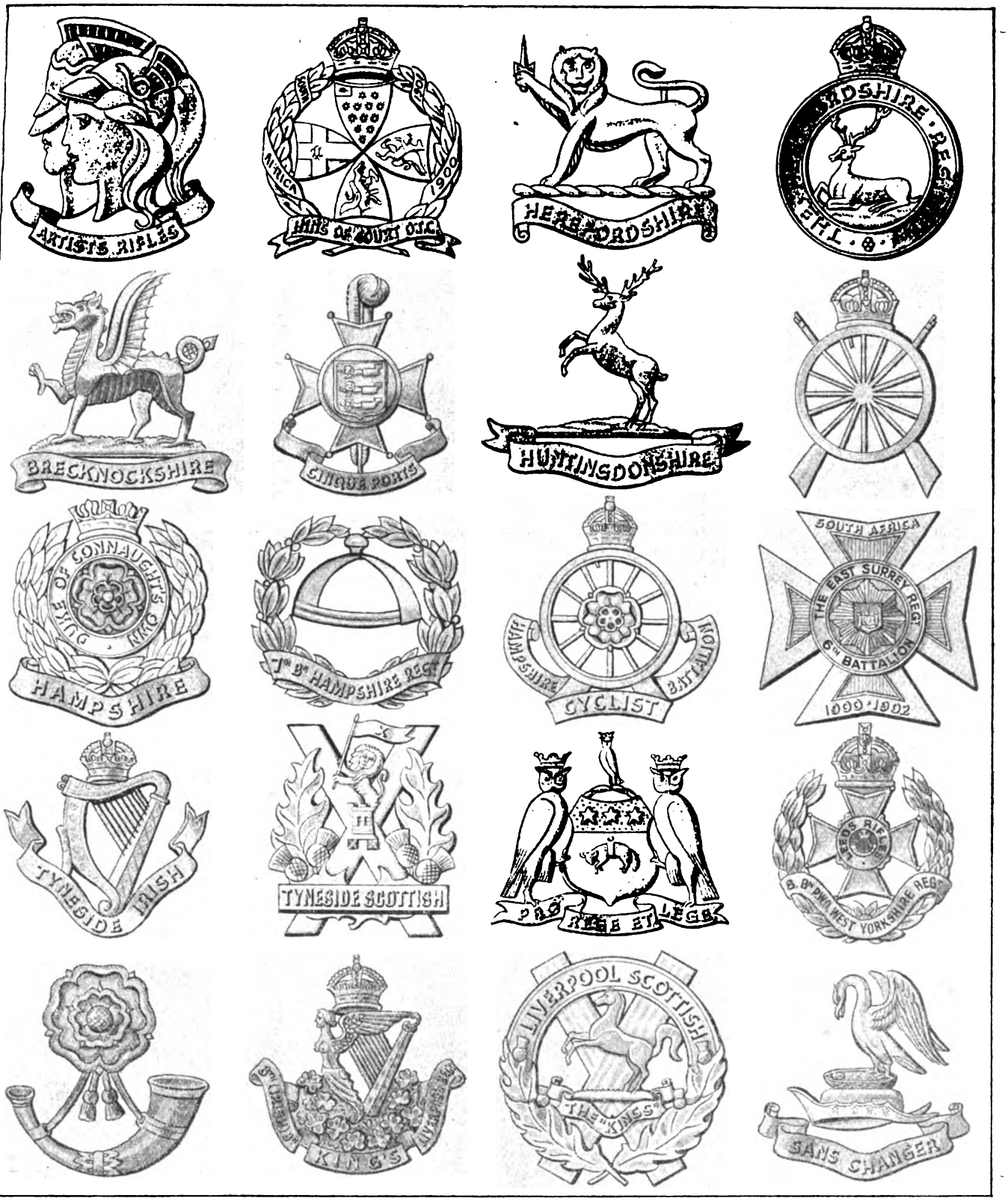

Specially drawn.

BADGES—ELEVENTH SELECTION

From left to right, beginning at the top, the badges are those of: 1—The Artists' Rifles (28th London Regt.). 2—Inns of Court O.T.C. 3—The Herefordshire Regt. 4—The Hertfordshire Regt. 5—The Brecknockshire Batt., South Wales Borderers. 6—The Cinque Ports Batt. (5th Royal Sussex Regt.). 7—The Huntingdonshire Cyclist Batt. 8—The Northern Cyclist Batt. 9—6th Batt. Hampshire Regt. 10—7th Batt. Hampshire Regt. 11—Hampshire Cyclist Batt. 12—6th Batt. East Surrey Regt. 13—Tyneside Irish (24th/27th Northumberland Fusiliers). 14—Tyneside Scottish (20th/23rd Northumberland Fusiliers). 15—City of Leeds Batt. West Yorkshire Regt. 16—The Leeds Rifles (7th/8th West Yorkshire Regt.). 17—The Liverpool Rifles (6th King's Liverpool Regt.). 18—Liverpool Irish (8th K.L.R.). 19—Liverpool Scottish (10th K.L.R.). 20—Liverpool Pals Brigade (17th/20th K.L.R.).

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DOINGT IN DISTRESS

The 16th Division, on the extreme right of the VII Corps, took up a position here about 11 a.m. on March 23rd, 1918, hoping to shield Péronne. Further withdrawal became necessary, however, and was successfully carried out thanks to fine rearguard work in and around Doingt by the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 157th Field Company R.E., and 11th Hampshires (Pioneers).

divisions (22nd, 26th, 27th, and 28th) of the Salonica Force.

His Favourite Formation

The red triangle of the 29th Division had a definite origin. The Commander (Sir Beauvoir de Lisle) was a great believer in the importance of the "diamond" formation for open fighting, so all ranks wore half a red diamond on each shoulder—hence the broad base and short perpendicular.

The 30th Division was raised by the Earl of Derby, and used his crest, worked in silver thread on a circular background of black cloth. It is actually an eagle feeding on a child and standing on a cap of maintenance.

Prior to 1917, the "Sign" of the 31st Division was a red triangle with a white edge and with a white vertical bar on each side of the white triangle. Then the roses of York and Lancaster were adopted, with green stalks on a black ground circular in shape. The white rose was on the left, and in the case of the Yorkshire units it overlapped the red, while in the case of the Lancastrian units and the Divisional artillery the red rose overlapped the white one.

Major-General Sir William Rycroft started the "four eights" of the 32nd Division. This device, a circle in the centre with four circles of the same size adjoining it and equally spaced out, the centre circle forming the base of each figure "8," was really a clever bit of camouflage, and was certainly not too evident.

The "double-three domino" stood for the 33rd Division. Dominoes as "Signs" were not uncommon among smaller formations—neither, for that matter, were playing-cards.

The black and white chequer square of the 34th Division was adopted by Major-General Ingouville Williams purely for simplicity; a reason (if it can be called such) was afterwards invented to account for it. There were twelve white squares and thirteen black squares in the design. Put down the figures 12 and under them the figures 13. Add them up diagonally, and you get the total 34.

Starting with a bantam cock as its "Sign," the 35th Division substituted a circular device of seven "fives" linked together. In some cases the semi-circular parts of the fives were turned inside, but the badge was more often seen with these parts outside, which gave it the appearance of a circle from which protruded seven "knobs." This seven fives for thirty-five was a neat device.

The Red Hand of Ulster

The 36th (Ulster) Division, needless to say, took the badge of Ulster, the "red hand." As a rule, the right hand was shown, and this is heraldically correct, but there were examples of the left hand being used.

The golden horseshoe of the 37th Division was adopted in July, 1916, and was originally shown with its

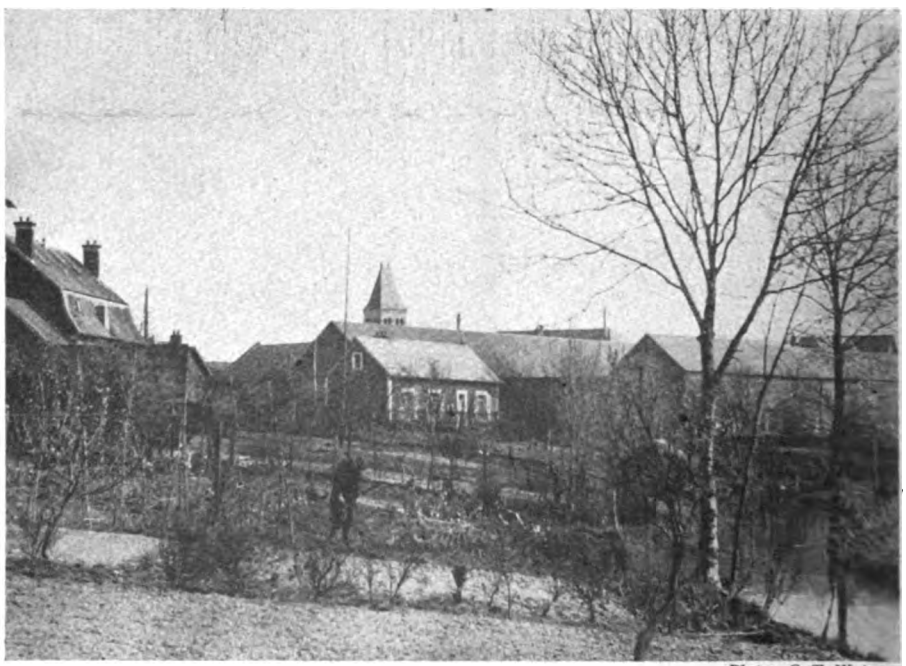

Photo: G. T. Watson.

BY THE SIDE OF THE STREAM

A view of modern Doingt grouped about the small River Cologne. The village is a suburb of Péronne, lying 2 km. south-east of it, at the junction of the main road to Ham and the minor road to Beire and Tincourt-Boucly. Doingt was recovered for the Allies on September 5th, 1918, by the 5th Australian Division. It has one British cemetery.

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From SOUCHEZ to ECURIE

Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

TAKING A STROLL IN SOUCHEZ

The two British soldiers in the picture are strolling down the main street of the devastated village on July 17th, 1917. Souchez lies 11 km. north of Arras, on the Arras-Béthune road, and 8 km. south-west of Lens. A little stream runs through the village, widening eventually into the Lens branch of the Haute-Deule Canal. The lower reaches of this rivulet are called the Souchez, but the upper part, which flows through Souchez itself, is somewhat contrarily named the Carency.

Photo: G. T. Watson

SOUCHEZ ON A BUSY AFTERNOON

Until the close of 1915 Souchez was a French responsibility, and by no means a light one. Indeed, during the struggle known (to our Allies) as the Second Battle of Artois, May 9th-June 15th, 1915, the history of the village is one long record of success and counter-success. The French captured the sugar-refinery on May 31st, and the railway station on June 12th. But the end of the battle found Souchez proper still in German hands, nor did it fall until September 26th.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

SOUCHEZ UNDER BRITISH OCCUPATION

A reminder of the French occupation of Souchez is to be found in the name of one of the two British cemeteries here—Zouave Valley Cemetery, which contains 128 United Kingdom, 93 Canadian, 8 South African, 1 German, and 4 unidentified fallen. During the British period of tenure, considerable fighting took place here, involving principally the 4th Canadian and 24th Divisions of the First Army.

Photo: G. T. Watson

SOUCHEZ: A RUSH HOUR SCENE

The main British attacks in this region took place during April, 1917, and were directed against two small hills, one on either side of the Carency-Souchez stream, known respectively as the Pimple and the Bois-en-Hache, or Hatchet Wood. Both were captured on April 12th, thus giving us command over Givenchy and Hirondelle Woods, from which it had become apparent that the enemy was about to attempt the recovery of Vimy Ridge.

THE SAD END OF

An interesting incident connected with the of the mayor and various aldermen into treasure." This treasure was a sum of m inhabitants on the approach of the Germa and the mayor and aldermen

THE EAST END O

The other British cemetery at Souch of the railway station, on the Arras- 47th Division in March, 1917, and September, 1918, by the Canadian now contains 6,705 United Kingdo

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

OUCHEZ CHURCH

itish occupation of Souchez is the re-entry
ne ruined village to search for "hidden
ey which had been hastily buried by the
in 1914. The enemy never discovered it,
ere able to remove it intact.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

ON THE BÉTHUNE-ARRAS ROAD

This is a picture, taken on February 28th, 1916, of La Targette, a small village almost halfway between Souchez and the suburbs of Arras. La Targette probably owes its origin to the fact that the Arras-Béthune road is here crossed by the Aubigny-Douai route, which is also the link between Mont-St. Eloi and Neuville-St. Vaast. The hamlet was captured by the French on May 9th, 1915.

Photo: G. T. Watson

SOUCHEZ CHURCH

is that of Cabaret Rouge, 1½ km. south
thune road. This was begun by the
vas used from December, 1916, to
rps. Enlarged after the Armistice, it
888 Empire, and 4 German dead.

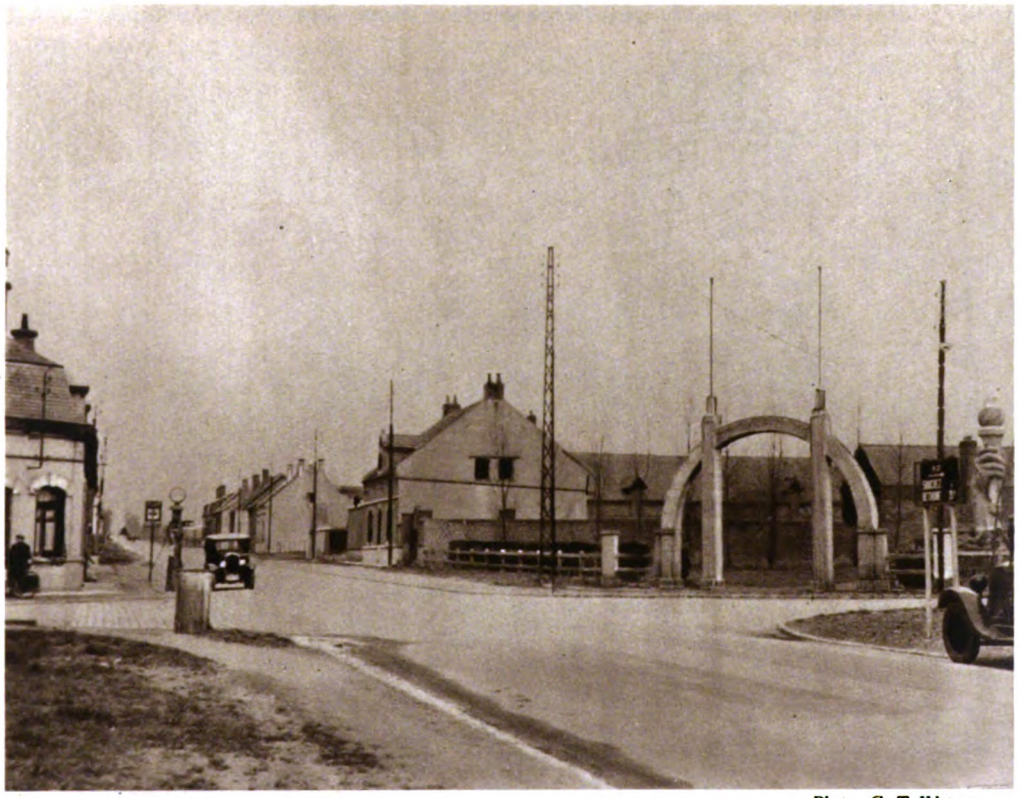

Photo: G. T. Watson

THE TORCH OF LIBERTY

Little active fighting took place at La Targette after the British had assumed control of this sector. In the above view, which shows the cross-roads, the semi-circular gate is the entrance to the *Cité des Mutilés*. Of yet greater interest is the War memorial on the extreme right. This takes the form of a huge concrete hand grasping the torch of liberty, and is set in a pile of rubble from the ruins of the old village. The conception is rather fine for so small a place.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

CHAOS AT ÉCURIE

With this village we have arrived within 3 or 4 km. of the northern suburbs of Arras. Écurie lies in the fork formed by the Arras-Béthune and Arras-Lens roads, and is actually at the crossing of two lanes leading respectively from Arras to Neuville-St. Vaast and Anzin-St. Aubin to Roclincourt. Once more, as with the other two villages illustrated in this section, the bulk of active fighting here concerned the French in 1915. The view above was taken on March 2nd, 1916.

Photo: G. T. Watson

CHURCH AND CHICKENS

On May 9th, 1915, the opening date of the Second Battle of Artois, Écurie was just on the French side of the front line, and lay almost at the right-hand extremity of the front of attack. It was probably owing to its flank position that not much progress was made in front of it, the main drive being toward Vimy Ridge, farther north. At the commencement of the Battle of Arras, April, 1917, Écurie lay a little nearer our front line than La Targette.

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points downwards; but in November of that year it was reversed, in accordance with the "horseshoe superstition" mentioned above. It was cut out of chrome-yellow cloth and worn on the shoulders by officers and men, and it was painted in gold upon the vehicles whenever it was possible to get hold of gold paint.

The 38th (Welsh) Division adopted the red dragon of Wales, and this was worked on a black cloth background. Every soul in the division wore it on the sleeve.

When the 39th Division landed in France in 1916 it used as its "Sign" three Eton-blue stripes on a white ground. General Barnadiston designed it, possibly for its simplicity, for no history seems to have been attached to its origin.

The 40th Division started with the white diamond as its "Sign." In 1917 a bantam cock was placed behind the diamond, for the division was originally a "Bantam" division. After the capture of Bourlon Wood in November, 1917, an acorn and two oak-leaves were placed on the diamond to commemorate this feat.

A very simple system was used by the 41st Division. The distinctive mark of the division was a white diagonal bar placed upon a square. Divisional H.Q., R.A.M.C., and R.E. had the top half of the square yellow and the bottom half red. The Artillery square was half-blue, half-red; that of the Divisional Train half-blue, half-white; while the Pioneers were known by a light blue background. The 122nd Infantry Brigade had a green square, the 123rd a red, and the 124th a yellow one. In addition, each battalion had a number, 1, 2, 3, or 4, painted on its Brigade "Sign."

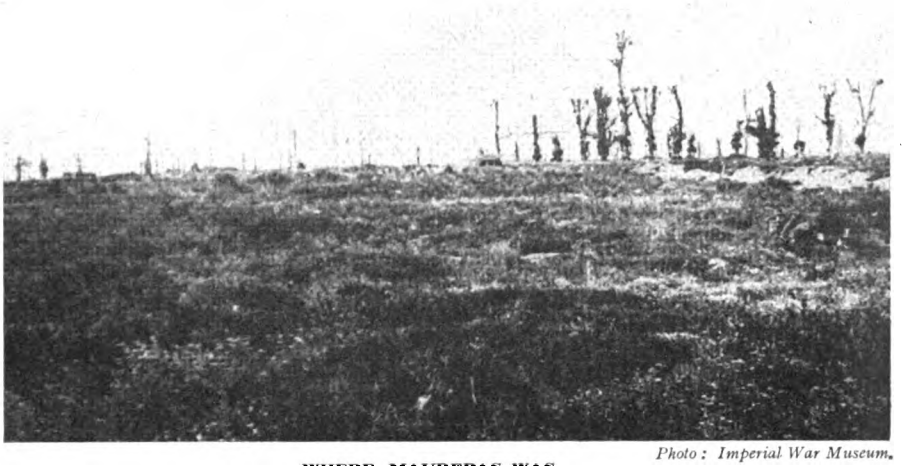

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WHERE MAUREPAS WAS

Maurepas is situated 3 km. south-south-west of Combles, midway between Hardecourt-aux-Bois and Leforest. The French reached the outskirts of it on July 30th, 1916, took the southern part and the cemetery on August 12th, secured a little more of it on the 18th, and, after gruelling fighting, completed the capture on the 24th. The picture is dated July, 1917.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

WHERE MAUREPAS IS

Troops of the 35th Division, VII Corps, retired through this village on March 24th, 1918, a single battalion—the 12th Highland L.I.—holding the Maurepas ridge for a short time. The place was retaken by the 58th and 12th Divisions on August 29th. Some readers may remember the elaborate underground-shelter system, in which soldiers and civilians at times sought refuge beneath Maurepas ravine. Our photographer was unable to find a trace of the shelters during his visit.

An Encouraging Motto

Diamonds of various colours marked the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division, with the numbers of the units in the centres: in 1918 Major-General A. Solly-Flood added the motto "Go One Better," hoping that the spirit therein expressed would carry the Division to success.

The next three divisions, the 43rd, 44th, and 45th, served in India, and were ultimately absorbed into the Indian divisions. They do not appear to have borne any distinctive "Signs" of their own.

The oblong of the 46th (North Midland) Division had its top half scarlet and its bottom half dark green. When necessary, a white edging was added to show up the colours. The G.O.C. (Major-General the Hon. E. J. Stuart Wortley) was a Rifleman, and hence the colours of the 60th Rifles.

The 47th (London) Division (the old 2nd London Division) made use of an eight-pointed star of distinctive design as its device, placed upon a square background, with an edging of which the colours varied to distinguish divisional

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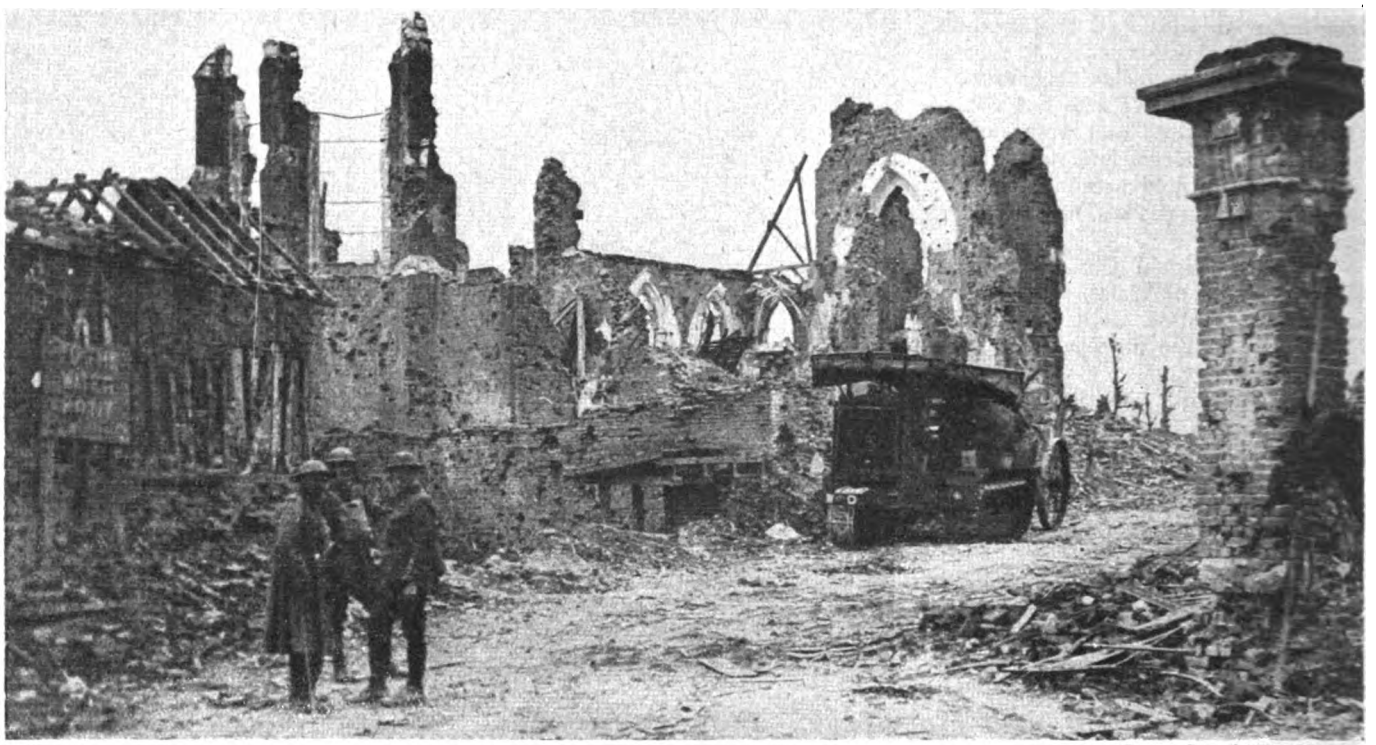

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IN LAMOTTE-EN-SANTERRE

There is, topographically, nothing to distinguish Lamotte-en-Santerre from Warfusée-Abancourt, for the two villages merge into one on either side of the Amiens—St. Quentin road, 6 km. east of Villers-Bretonneux. In the later stages of the March Retreat, three battalions of the 48th and 49th Brigades (16th Division) retired on Lamotte about 5 p.m. on the 27th, but were unable to stay there owing to heavy shelling, and were eventually put into trenches among Carey's Force to the west of the village.

and brigade troops. This star was invented by the transport, and it is believed that it was a simplified form of the star in the badge of the R.A.S.C.

A white diamond marked the 48th (South Midland) Division, the White Rose of Yorkshire the 49th (West Riding) Division.

The crest of its G.O.C.—Major-General Sir Percival Wilkinson—was adopted by the 50th (Northumbrian) Division, a unicorn's head in red.

The monogram "H.D." of the 51st (Highland) Division was a clever bit of camouflage, and earned for its wearers the affectionate nickname of "Harper's Duds," an allusion to its great commander.

There was no attempt at disguising the "Sign" of the 52nd (Lowland) Division. In the angle of the letter "L" (which was in blue for the 155th Brigade, red for the 156th, and yellow for the 157th) were the National Arms of Scotland, the white saltire on a blue shield; and to make assurance doubly sure, a Thistle was placed over the saltire.

The 53rd was a Welsh Division, and adopted the plumed crest of the Prince of Wales.

A very quaint "battle-honour" device was used by the 54th (East Anglian) Division. It was an umbrella, turned inside out, in honour of the division having turned the Turks out of Umbrella Hill, at Gaza, in 1917.

"The Rose of Lancaster"

"They win or die who wear the Rose of Lancaster," and so the 55th (West Lancashire) Division wore the red rose, five petals outside and five inside, with five green leaves on each side of the stalk, thus repeating the motif "Fifty-five."

The 56th (London) Division had a short Roman sword—the sword of St. Paul—as its "Sign." Major-General Sir Charles Hull adopted it from the Arms of the City, and it was nicknamed—somewhat erroneously—"Wat Tyler's Dagger."

A "D" for Lord Derby was the mark of the 57th (West Lancashire) Division. This was most cleverly disguised. It was turned over on its side, the straight bar in white forming the base, the curved part being in red, and the whole appeared on a black background.

The Tower of London marked the 58th (London) Division. It was generally shown as a conventional tower, but in several cases a more elaborate representation of the actual Tower was used.

The 59th (North Midland) Division had the quaint-shaped Cross of Offa, King of Mercia A.D. 755–796, in yellow.

The 60th (London) Division was known by a bee, the design of the insect varying greatly according to the skill of each individual artist. This was an allusion to the initial of the G.O.C.'s surname, Major-General Sir Edward Bulfin.

The Roman numerals LXI joined up together, a simple idea, completely mystified many people who did not realise that the design was worn by the 61st (South Midland) Division.

And now we come to another quaint "Sign" (which had no particular origin), the Pelican of the 62nd (West Riding) Division. The bird stood straight upright on one leg, and waved the other foot gaily in front of it. Before long the men were known as "the Pelicans," and in the Division they had a saying, "When ta b—y doock puts ta b—y foot dawn, ta b—y War will be b—y well owver."

The Famous Anchor and Cable

The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division was known by its anchor and cable. The 64th never used an official "Sign." The 65th Division had the Sign of the Zodiac for Leo.

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The 66th (East Lancashire) Division had a simple triangle in light blue with a yellow horizontal bar, one-third of its depth, in its middle. The six sevens radiating from the centre, which were reminiscent of the three sevens of the 21st, was the badge of the 67th (Home Counties) Division.

Neither the 68th (Welch) nor the 69th (East Anglian) Divisions used a "Sign." The 71st Division had a triangle, the top half blue and the lower half red.

The 74th (Yeomanry) Division was dismounted and turned into infantry. Hence its "broken spur" device. This was one of the best-known "Signs" in the whole War.

The 75th Division had a battle-honour, a key, to mark its capture of Nebi Samwil in November, 1917. This Mosque, on its dominating height, was the key to Jerusalem.

A very careful scheme was worked out for the five Australian divisions, by which not only the division, but the brigade and individual unit, could be recognised.

The shape of the device showed the division. Thus the 1st had an oblong with its longer sides placed horizontally. The 2nd had a diamond, the 3rd an oval with the longer axis horizontal. A circle marked the 4th, and another oblong, this time with the longer sides vertical, marked the 5th. The Divisional "Sign" was the device in a broad black outline. Each Brigade had its divisional "shape" in plain colour, and each unit the same shape halved in two colours, one being the colour of the brigade and the other the colour of the unit.

The golden letter "A," which was to be seen on the unit patches, meant that the wearer had taken part in the Gallipoli Campaign.

The Anzac Mounted Division and the Australian Mounted Division both used rectangular patches with the longer sides placed horizontally, but their colours were divided diagonally.

A triangle in black outline marked the Australian Corps. It is said that it was the top of the letter "A."

Ingenious Canadian "Signs"

The Canadian "Signs" were also very carefully worked out. Each division was known by the colour of an oblong of cloth, three inches by two inches. Red stood for the 1st, blue for the 2nd, french grey for the 3rd, and green for the 4th Division. Each divisional patch had a smaller patch on top, the colour of this patch signifying the brigade. Finally, the shape of the smaller patch—whether circular, square, semi-circular, or triangular—identified the battalion.

The New Zealand Division adopted the national silver fern.

The Desert Mounted Corps had the palm tree as "Sign."

So ends this brief—almost too brief—epitome. Space is precious, or columns could be filled with more detailed descriptions of the signs, and of the stories and legends, some true and some very untrue, concerning them. The years are passing, and the majority of the divisions—and of the battalions and units which composed them—have ceased to exist. Now they are little but a memory. But tucked away here and there, on odd buildings, in churches, on memorials, and in museums, are these quaint devices which to the men who wore them at the time had a definite reality.

And perhaps the tag from Virgil which is quoted at the head of this chapter can thus be construed—"Some day it may be pleasant to remember."

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A LACE-LIKE SPIRE

On March 27th, 1918, the German *43rd Regiment* of the *1st Division* took possession of Lamotte-en-Santerre less than two hours after the British had abandoned it; and despite a counter-attack on the 28th by the 61st and 1st Cavalry Divisions, the express aim of which was to recapture the village, it remained in enemy hands until August 8th. It was then retaken, without undue difficulty, by troops of the Australian Corps.

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CHAPTER LXXXII

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON, APRIL, 1918

The naval attack at Zeebrugge and Ostend launched during the night of April 22nd/23rd, 1918, may be described as one of the most gallant exploits of all time. As an example of careful planning, of audacity and determination in execution, this naval enterprise was unique. A point of great interest arises in considering the Zeebrugge affair. Sir Roger Keyes was in a large measure responsible for both the plan and the direction of the expedition. In this connection it will be remembered that Sir Roger Keyes was Chief of Staff to Admiral de Robeck at the Dardanelles. It will be remembered, likewise, that Sir Roger believed that the ships could force the passage of the Dardanelles, and was permitted to return home to press his views. It may well be that if this very intrepid naval officer had had his way the ships would have won through. The qualities displayed at Zeebrugge were precisely those needed to open up the Straits.

In Chapter LX the terrible submarine menace of 1917 was dealt with at some length. The chapter ended on a cheerful note; but the improvement in the situation was but relative. Although the losses of merchant shipping had been sensibly reduced they were still alarmingly high; although toll had been taken of the German U-boats the replacement of them still exceeded the rate at which they were being destroyed. Worse still, the barrage of nets and mines across the Straits of Dover was proving no real obstacle to the passage of German submarines. Even when a new deep minefield was laid in November, 1917, between the Varne and Cape Gris Nez no fewer than twenty-one U-boats successfully ran the gauntlet in the first fourteen days.

Sealing Up Submarine Lairs

In these circumstances it was not unnatural that attention should have been directed to another possible method of dealing with the submarine pest, namely to seal up the lairs from which the craft were wont to emerge. These lairs were unpleasantly close to the English coast-line, for, when the Germans overran Belgium towards the end of 1914, they obtained possession of the Belgian coast-line except for a minute sector adjoining the north-west frontier of France. Actually the real submarine base in this portion of the theatre of war was an inland city—Bruges, which was situated some miles from salt water. Bruges, however, was connected by two canals with the ports of Zeebrugge (which means "Bruges-on-Sea") and Ostend, respectively, and the city therefore formed an admirable and sheltered base. Further, submarines could be dispatched, in sections, by rail from Germany to Bruges, there to be fitted together and then to emerge either from Zeebrugge or Ostend to carry out their work on or under the high seas.

Ever since 1915 the possibility of sealing up these ports had been discussed, but for various reasons the project had been put aside. Towards the end of 1917, however, when Vice-Admiral Sir Roger Keyes became Director of Plans at the Admiralty, the files of confidential papers dealing with former projects were brought to his notice. To an officer so charged with the fighting spirit as was Sir Roger the possibilities of such a scheme made a great appeal, and when, at the beginning of 1918, he was posted to the command at Dover he was able to deal with the practical side of the question. The Admiralty had by now been convinced of the advisability of a naval attack against the German submarine bases in Belgium, and informed Admiral Keyes that he was free to form a plan and to execute it as he thought best. It was realised that the casualties in such an attempt were likely to be very severe, but Admiral Keyes had reminded the Board that the operation was not more risky to the men engaged than any massed attack on the Western Front would be to soldiers.

Entirely a Naval Operation

The problem which now confronted Sir Roger Keyes was one which might well have daunted a lesser man, and it is only just here to enumerate some of the difficulties involved. In the first place the very nature of the problem, and the position of the bases to be attacked, ruled out of court any possibility of combined operations—that is to say of co-operation between the Navy and the Army. The attacks must be entirely a naval "show"; and they involved operations against a stretch of coast-line which had been so thoroughly fortified as to be of tremendous strength. In the second place, as surprise would be the very essence of the business, any attack by daylight could be at once ruled out, and therefore, the operations must be carried out in complete darkness. Further, the navigational difficulties of the Belgian coast-line were notorious, and the consequent difficulty of co-ordinating, in total darkness, the movements—all of which had to be performed to a rigid schedule and a peremptory time-table—was almost staggering. Then, as success would hinge upon the most absolute secrecy, all the preliminary preparations, all the staff work and all the rehearsals had to be invested with the silence of the tomb. Spying and secret service were carried out during the War by both sides to an extent unrealised by the ordinary citizen; and in this case the least indiscretion—almost a single unguarded word—might easily lead to the opening of German eyes and to disaster, destruction, and death to the attacking forces.

Of the two ports to be raided that of Zeebrugge was of the greater value to the enemy. Its main feature was an immense breakwater—or mole, as it was called—in the form of a quarter circle, springing from the shore and carrying the line of railway on which Zeebrugge relied as a commercial port in time of peace. There were two points connected with the Mole which should be carefully borne in mind, as they had a very

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important influence on the operations. In the first place—unlike many breakwaters which on the exposed, or sea, side, are protected by masses of loose rocks and stones, the Mole was built up sheer and vertical from its foundations; consequently a ship could in moderate weather be brought alongside. And in the second place it was not continuous. There was a break in it near the land, bridged by an iron lattice viaduct. Could this viaduct be destroyed, no reinforcements from the shore could reach the garrison of the Mole itself. As for the canal, it debouched in the area covered by the curving Mole, and, to reach the lock gates at the entrance, any attacking vessel must needs pass within point-blank range of the battery of guns with which the outer end of the Mole was armed.

The Zeebrugge Plan

Put very briefly, Sir Roger Keyes's plan was to send three old light cruisers to sink themselves at the entrance to the canal; and, to assist this very hazardous operation, a diversion was to be made against the Mole battery by an attack from the exposed, or sea, side of the breakwater. Further, steps were to be taken to blow up the viaduct mentioned above so as to prevent the diversion being interrupted by the arrival of German reinforcements from the shore. Admiral Keyes therefore set at once to the triple task of selecting and fitting out the storm-ships and the block-ships; of collecting and training the officers and men; and of devising every detail of the final plan. There was one aspect of the problem which augured for success. Neither Zeebrugge nor Ostend was an unknown port. Both had been used by us in October, 1914, for the debarkation of the 3rd Cavalry Division and the 7th Division, and the details of them were familiar to many of our naval officers. Moreover, there were many Belgian engineers in this country as refugees, some of whom had been employed upon the construction of the Mole and canal and the development of Zeebrugge.

For use as a storm-ship—that is to say, the vessel which was to be laid alongside the seaward side of the Mole, and from which storming parties would go ashore to rush the German battery—the old armoured cruiser *Vindictive* was selected. The fitting out of this old vessel for a task unique in naval warfare was a matter which required long and careful consideration. The most important question was to arrange for the rapid landing of the storming parties on the Mole, which would tower high above the *Vindictive* as she lay alongside. For this purpose a false upper deck was built, hinged to which were fourteen narrow "brows"—or gangways, or bridges as a landsman might call them—which would be let down by tackles, like drawbridges of old. As the ship's guns would be faced by the side of the Mole, three howitzers were installed which could "lob" projectiles over the parapet. Fenders of huge size were carried to take the first bump as the *Vindictive* should come alongside. As the cruiser herself would be unable to

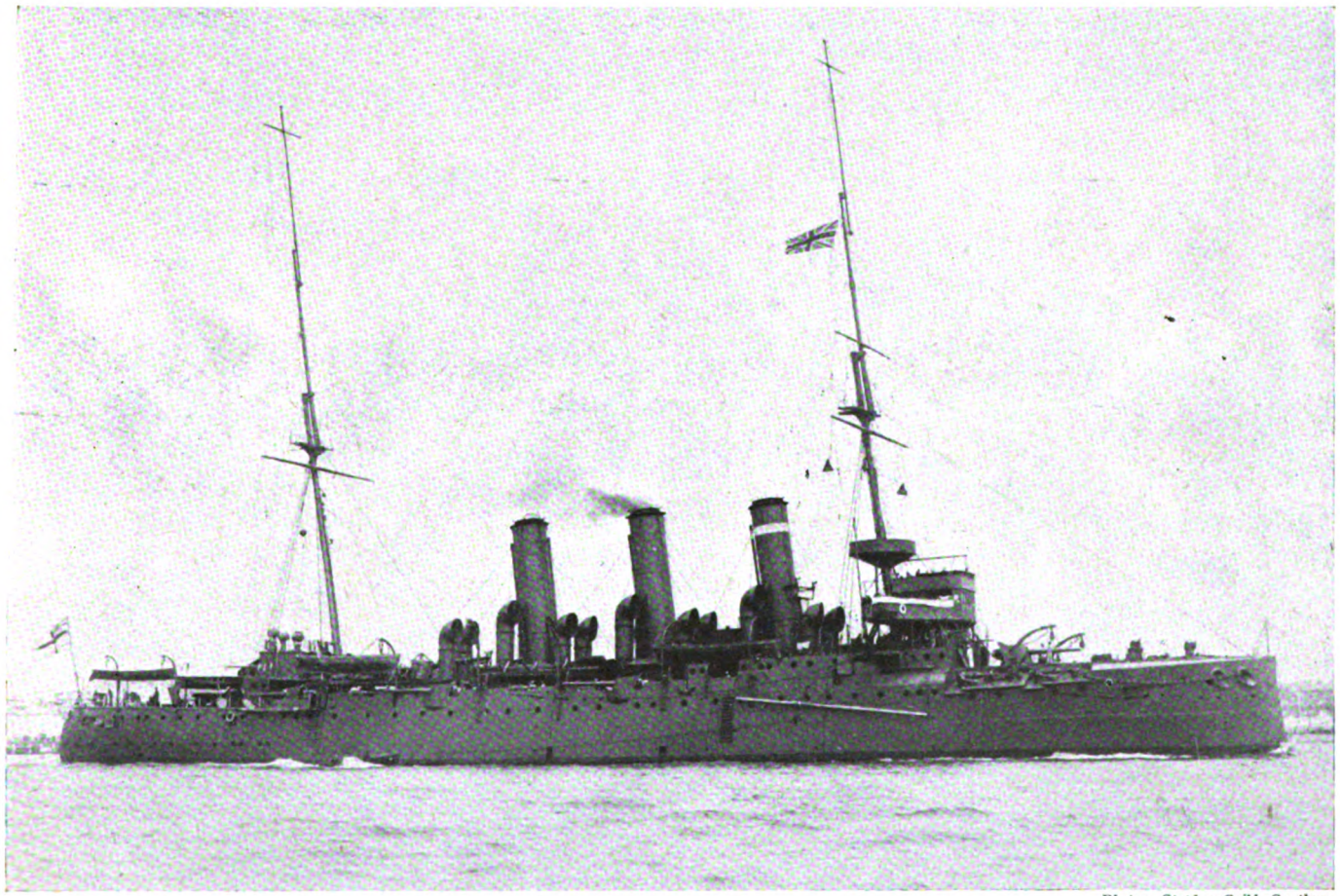

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

H.M.S. *VINDICTIVE*

Thanks to her exploits at Zeebrugge, this ancient armoured cruiser rose from a position of not unnatural obscurity to be one of the most famous vessels participating in the Great War. This photograph shows the vessel before the fray, and should be compared with that on page 1367, which shows her afterwards, a short time before her sinking.

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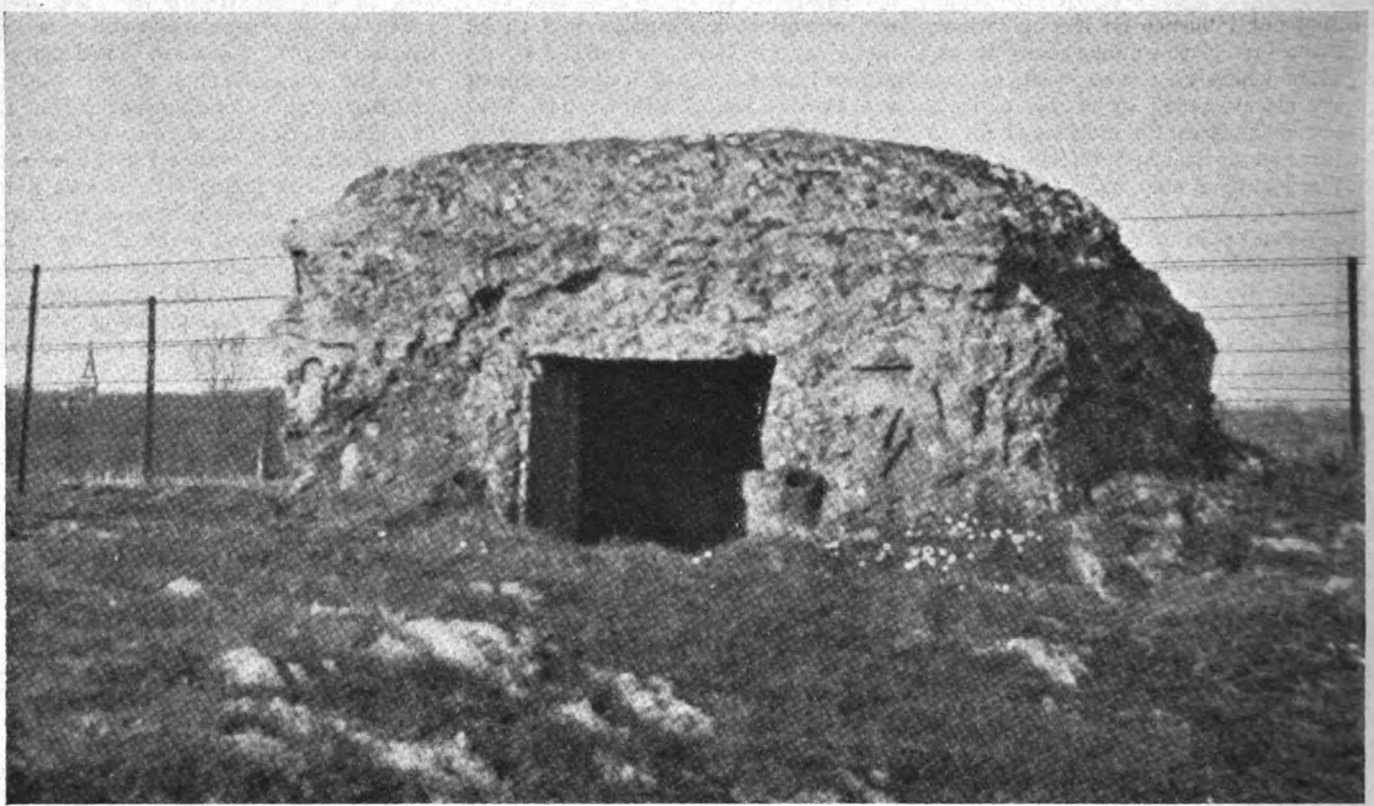

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A BRITISH "PILL-BOX"

This grim relic of a tragic battlefield is an old British "pill-box," still surviving, in the neighbourhood of Gommecourt. On the extreme right may be seen the trees of Gommecourt Wood, while on the left, capped by a spire, rises a tower of the new château. Further to the left lies Fonquevillers.

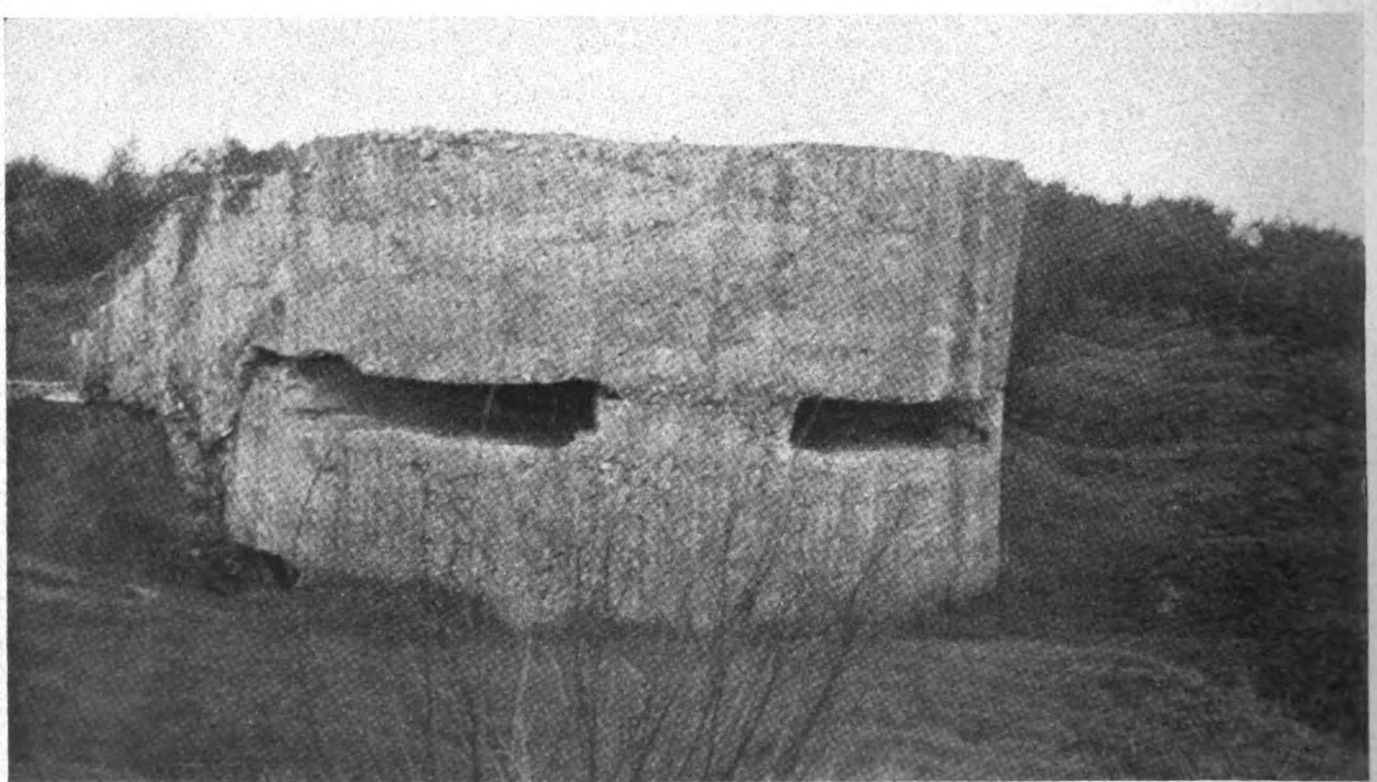

Photo: G. T. Watson.

LIKE A GIANT'S FACE

Startling and sinister is the face-like exterior of this old "pill-box" on Hill 60. The structure is curious, for it was made by the British on the top of a "pill-box" captured from the Germans. Our strong-point was therefore able to make use of the enemy's earth-works and communications.

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

AT MODERN LANKHOF FARM

The farm lies 2½ km. south of Ypres, close to Bedford House Cemetery. The concrete redoubts seen in the photograph have been admirably adapted to form cattle-shelters. Bedford House—originally Château Rosenberg—was heavily shelled while forming 55th Brigade H.Q. during "Third Ypres," 1917. Note the waterlogged land in the foreground.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

IN A FIELD AT FREZENBERG

The German concrete shelters in the foreground used to be immediately behind the German lines, and formed part of the defences of Zonnebeke. The camera is looking into the entrance of the fortifications, and affords us a good idea of what the Allied soldiers were up against.

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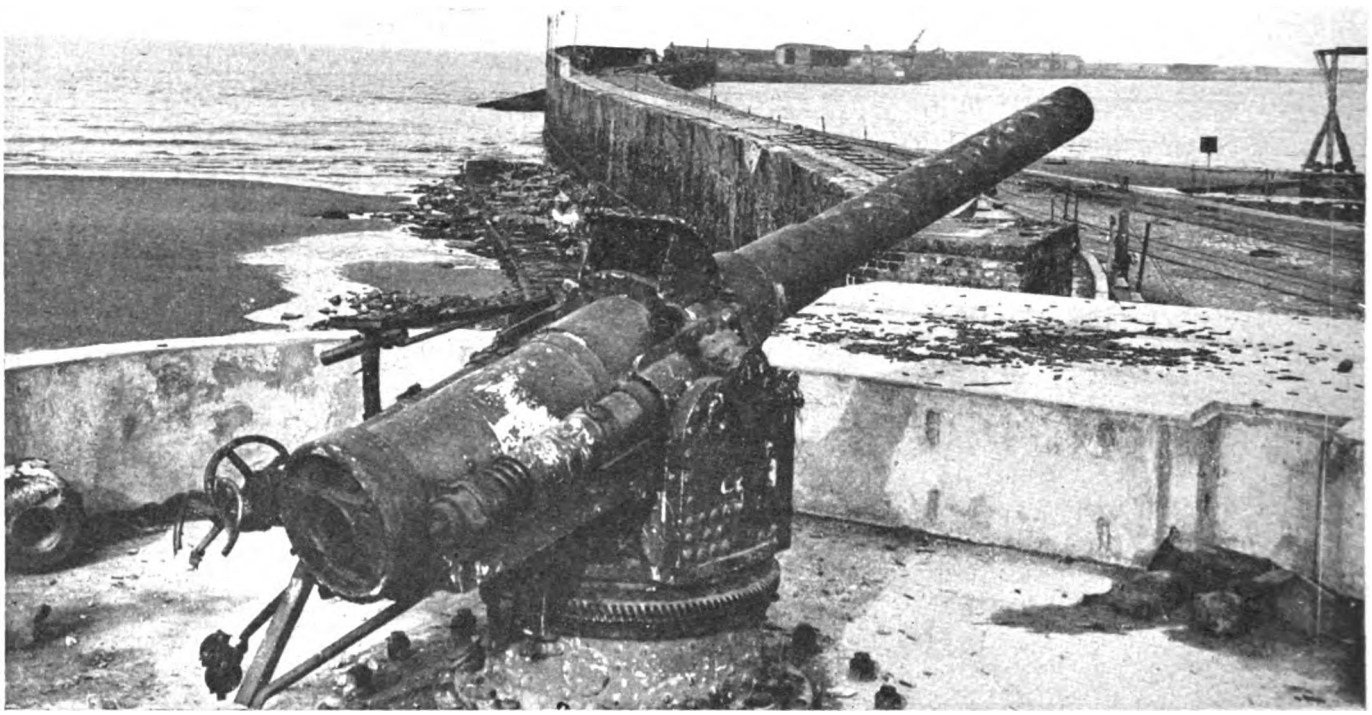

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE CELEBRATED MOLE

A general view of the famous Mole at Zeebrugge, as it appeared on October 23rd, 1918. In the foreground—that is, at the shore end—is seen one of the 150-mm. guns of the Lübeck Battery. Zeebrugge had a long War history, for it was here that the 7th Division landed on October 7th, 1914, five days before the Allies had to evacuate the port. It began to develop as a U-boat base early in 1915, and for the next three years was subjected to an almost countless number of air-raids. It was re-occupied by the Belgians on October 19th, 1918.

accommodate all the stormers required, the bulk were to be conveyed in two Mersey ferry-boats, the *Daffodil* and *Iris* —very handy vessels, practically unsinkable and with immense carrying capacity, but with such a limited range of action that they would have to be towed across to Zeebrugge. All these three craft were fitted with large grappling-irons suspended from derricks.

Preparing the Block-ships

For use as block-ships there were selected the old unarmoured cruisers, *Thetis*, *Iphigenia*, and *Intrepid* for Zeebrugge, and the *Sirius* and *Brilliant* for Ostend. All five were loaded with cement carried between 20 to 30 feet above the keel, the object being not entirely to make the ships heavier—and thus less easily shifted—but to increase the difficulty of using acetylene gas for cutting them to pieces. In order to ensure that the vessels should sink quickly and unmistakably, every one of them had explosive charges fitted low down so that the bottom could be blown out and the sea admitted at the critical moment. Enough guns were left in each of the cruisers to enable them to engage the German batteries on the Mole if required.

The three storm-ships and the five cruisers for blocking duties would, however, form but a small portion numerically of the expedition. Monitors—there would be nine of them—would be required for long-range bombardment of the enemy's shore batteries. Then there would be attendant destroyers for escort, patrolling, and other important duties. There would also be required a minesweeper. Further, the light cruiser force at Harwich, with its flotilla of destroyers, was to cover the whole operation and prevent interference from the northward. And in addition there was to be a veritable fleet of coastal motor boats, motor launches—as well as seven French torpedo boats from Dunkirk. Two old submarines were also included. In all, over one hundred and sixty craft were to take part in the operations against the two Belgian ports. The layman may well feel amazed at the perfection of staff work, the foresight, the rehearsing, and the attention to detail absolutely essential for the assembly and manœuvring, in absolute darkness, of this force, made up of ships and boats of all ages, speeds, sizes, and types.

Besides the actual crews belonging to the vessels enumerated, nearly 1,800 officers and men were required for the expedition,[1] of whom between seven and

[1] 82 Officers, 1,698 Men.

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eight hundred were furnished by the Royal Marines.[1] The personnel consisted entirely of volunteers; likely, hard-bitten officers and men were asked if they were prepared to undertake something "hazardous." Every single soul thus approached replied in the affirmative and—to the ill-concealed envy of their shipmates—began at once a preliminary hardening—boat pulling, physical jerks, route-marching, and all that. The universal belief amongst the chosen and their fellows was that a naval brigade, or brigades, was to be sent to France for land operations to succour the Army, which was in sore straits. Soon, however, the officers selected were necessarily entrusted with the secret, but for some time afterwards the other ranks were firmly convinced that the hazardous service would find them "somewhere in France."

The Veil is Lifted

Early in April the various ships and small craft had been assembled at their respective starting-points. The five block-ships and the *Vindictive* steamed out to the Swin Deep, a lonely anchorage some eight miles from the nearest point of the Essex coast-line. The need for mystery was now over, and on the evening of the second day out the men were let into the secret, and the purpose of the expedition was explained later in a lecture at which a specially constructed plaster model of the Mole at Zeebrugge was exhibited.

The nature of the expedition demanded a certain combination of conditions bound up with the hour of high tide, the absence of moon, the state of the weather, and the direction of the wind—the latter factor being of great importance in connection with the use of a smoke-screen made up of a composition specially invented for the occasion. It was therefore impossible to fix the date of departure any considerable time ahead. All that could be done was to keep the ships and men ready at a moment's notice. Actually two false starts were made. On the first occasion the expedition sailed on April 11th and got within sixteen miles of Zeebrugge. All conditions were highly favourable, but then the wind died away and began to blow from the south—the wrong direction for the smoke screens. Very reluctantly Sir Roger Keyes had to give the order to return. Three days later another attempt had to be called off owing to a rising wind and sea which would have prevented co-operation by the small craft. As may be imagined these abortive attempts were extremely trying to all ranks, though their value as dress rehearsals was undoubtedly great.

April 22nd was the eve of the day consecrated to England's patron saint, and, could the start but now take place, the struggle with the enemy would be fought out on St. George's Day. The day was ushered in with morning mist—and mist was all to the good; the sea smooth; the wind came out of the north—the very direction best suited for the dissemination of smoke screens—and the forecast gave hopes of its continuance from the same quarter for the rest of the day. As the forenoon wore away the weather was fine and sunny—too fine by far for an expedition which must now start in broad daylight to catch high tide at Zeebrugge and Ostend, which would occur soon after midnight. But as a whole the combination was as favourable as might reasonably be expected. From a lighthouse near Swin Deep it was possible to telephone to Sir Roger Keyes at Dover. After some discussion as to weather or other conditions the order came through, "Proceed in execution of previous orders."

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

TWO FAMOUS MEN

A unique photograph showing Captain Carpenter, V.C., the *Vindictive's* commander at the storming of the Mole, in conversation with King Albert of the Belgians on the occasion of a visit paid by the latter to Zeebrugge to see salvage operations. It is worthy of mention that, in recognition of the Navy's heroic exploit, King George V also visited the port, on December 9th, 1918.

[1] R.M.A.—2 Officers, 58 Other Ranks.
R.M.L.I.—30 Officers, 660 Other Ranks.

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Converging from all Quarters

And so on this 22nd April, 1918, the ships were getting under way and sailing. From four ports the armada was converging. The covering force of light cruisers and destroyers started from Harwich. The *Vindictive*, *Daffodil*, and *Iris* sailed from The Nore. From Dunkirk there steamed out forty-seven vessels, including nine French torpedo craft and motor launches. At Dover the rest of the force was concentrated, the vice-admiral's flag flying in the destroyer *Warwick*.

The vessels from the Swin and from Dover united under Sir Roger Keyes off the Goodwins and proceeded thence to the general rendezvous some sixty miles from the objectives, Zeebrugge and Ostend. This concentration, although necessarily carried out in broad daylight, had been without incident, and the scouting aeroplanes had sighted no submarine or seen any sign of hostile craft. And now the destroying armada moved on in three main columns, the two outer ones formed by modern destroyers, the *Warwick* leading the column on the starboard hand. The centre column was led by the *Vindictive*, towing the *Iris* and *Daffodil*, with the block-ships *Thetis*, *Intrepid*, *Iphigenia*, *Brilliant*, and *Sirius* following in the order named, and the destroyer *Lingfield* bringing up the rear. Disposed between the columns were thirty-three motor launches; and a score of coastal motor boats were in tow of the larger vessels. The two old submarines were towed by the destroyers *Trident* and *Mansfield*, respectively, in the starboard column.

Just before the twilight failed, the admiral made a general signal by semaphore from the *Warwick*, "St. George for England." And to it Captain Carpenter of the *Vindictive* replied, "May we give the Dragon's tail a damned good twist."

It was now just after eight o'clock. Darkness was setting in. So far everything had gone without a hitch, and the time-table had been observed to a minute. Nearly an hour later the *Warwick* was twenty-eight miles from Zeebrugge Mole. A fine, drizzling rain was falling but the night was quiet and the wind still blew towards the land—and on the direction of the wind all the success of the venture would largely depend. Sir Roger Keyes now signalled by wireless to the detached divisions at Dunkirk and to the north that the operations would be carried out.

Embarrassment Averted

The force was moving steadily through the darkness to a spot, previously buoyed by surveying officers, known as Position G, but before reaching it the whole assembly of vessels stopped in order to disembark the surplus crews on board the block-ships. It was now pitch dark, the moon being entirely obscured by clouds. In absolute silence the transfer was made, but of the surplus crews of the *Thetis* and *Iphigenia* many had concealed themselves, determined to see the matter through at any cost. The small vessel detailed to take off the surplus from the *Intrepid* failed to appear owing to a breakdown. This was a fortunate mishap, saving the commander of the *Intrepid* from an

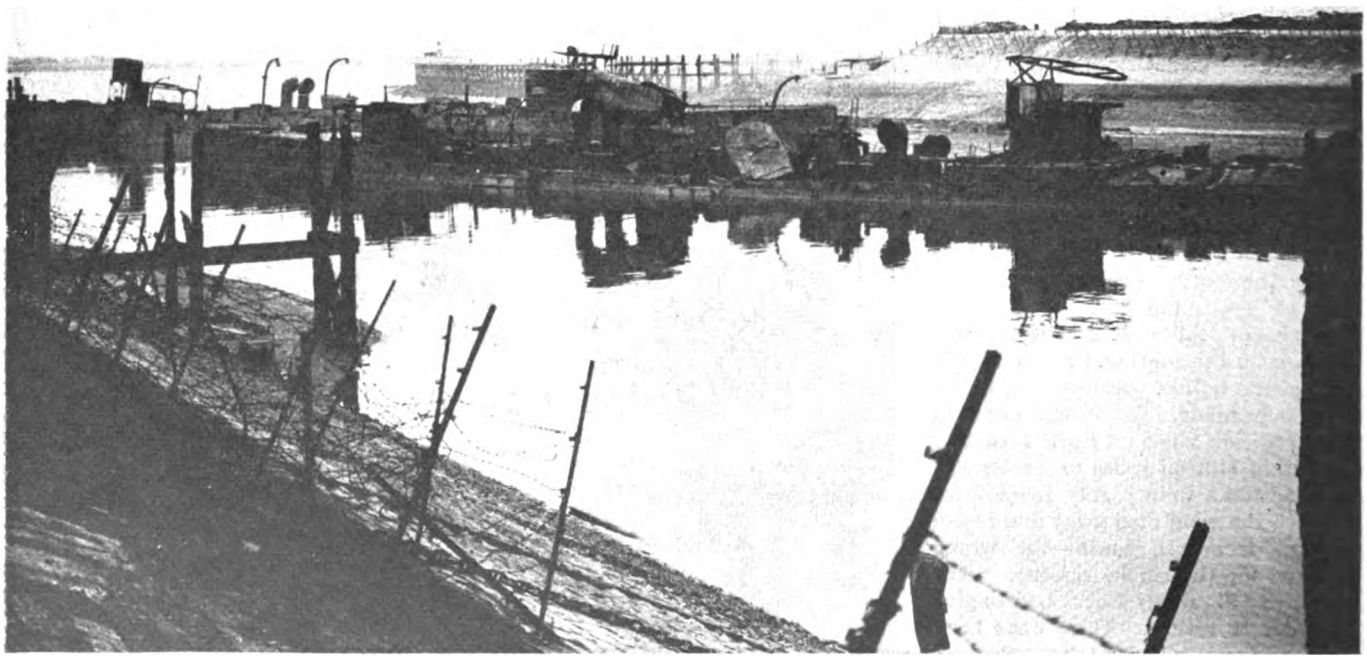

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PURPOSE ACHIEVED

In this picture, taken on October 24th, 1918, the two blockships *Iphigenia* and *Intrepid* (the latter nearer the camera) are seen lying across the harbour-mouth, where they were so effectively placed on April 23rd. The first suggestion that the Germans should be denied the use of Zeebrugge and Ostend had been contained in a memorandum sent to the War Council by Sir John French in January, 1915, when the General had proposed a land offensive for the recapture of the two ports.

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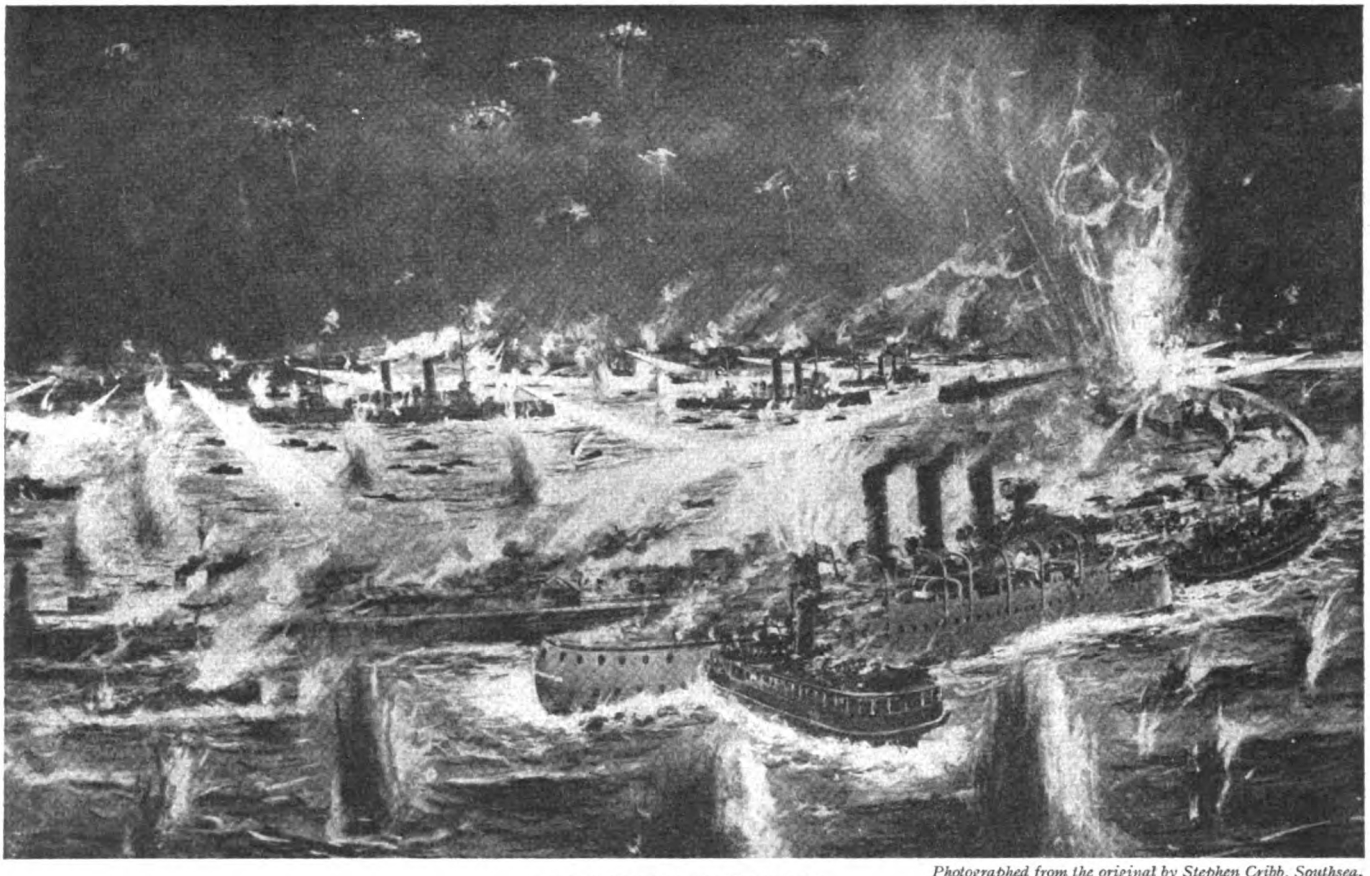

Photographed from the original by Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

An artist's depiction of the Zeebrugge raid, the style of which suggests that the painter's chief concern was lest the luridness of the scene be under-emphasised. Amid the welter of searchlights, bursting shells, and columns of water, the long curve of the Mole may just be distinguished, while in the foreground the majestic bulk of the *Vindictive* is being pushed against it by the Liverpool ferryboat *Daffodil*. A strong eastward tide had made it impossible to keep the cruiser alongside prior to the *Daffodil's* arrival.

embarrassing situation, for the surplus crew had already respectfully but firmly intimated their intention of staying in the ship and of sharing to the full in the dangers of the blocking operations.[1]

The coastal motor boats and one of the old submarines were cast off to proceed under their own power. No time was lost in re-forming the squadron, and a start was made for Position G. At the same time the Ostend block-ships parted company and disappeared in the darkness in the direction of Ostend. The fortunes of this detached force will be followed later, and, for the present, the reader will be told of what befell the stormers and blockers now moving on Zeebrugge some fifteen miles away.

Already it was evident that the weather was not favouring the expedition to the extent that had been hoped. A steady drizzle of rain was falling. This unfortunately prevented the employment of bombing aircraft from Dunkirk on which Sir Roger Keyes had counted. For by means of an intensive bombardment from the air it was hoped that the German gunners would have been forced to take refuge in their dug-outs while the storm-ships and block-ships were entering the danger zone. Another misfortune was that, owing to an unsuspected difficulty connected with the tidal streams, the monitors were somewhat behind their time-table in opening long-range fire.

[1] Dispatch of Sir Roger Keyes, May 9th, 1918, p. 95.

The Action Begins

However, just at 11.30 p.m. the roar of the guns on the monitors which had been detailed for the Zeebrugge operation could be heard. Already the coastal motor boats had raced forward and laid a preliminary smoke screen across the line of advance. In the *Vindictive* the crew went to action stations and the storming parties were under cover awaiting the order to storm the Mole. The cable party was standing by on the forecastle ready to drop anchors; the brows, or gangways, were ready to be lowered. At a given moment by watch-time the course of the *Vindictive* was altered towards the position where it was hoped to find the Mole. The wind had died away for some time and now the worst happened. A breeze came up again but from exactly the opposite direction from which it had been previously blowing. The smoke which had been pouring in volumes towards the land now came drifting back, and in a few moments was surging round everything in dense masses. The expedition was for the moment blinded. On board the *Vindictive* visibility could now have amounted hardly to a yard. The forecastle was invisible from the bridge. Then luckily the smoke screen suddenly lifted. Fortune, fickle as ever, now smiled upon the *Vindictive*, for there—barely three hundred yards distant and dead ahead—appeared a long, low, dark object. It was the Mole, and the lighthouse at its extremity could be clearly made out.

Instantly the German battery opened fire. The *Vindictive* immediately replied and there now took place a duel between ship and breakwater that is almost incredible. The extreme range

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NEUVILLE-ST. VAAST AGAIN

We illustrated the church, past and present, of Neuville-St. Vaast, on pages 1128 and 1129. Here, although it does not look much like it, is a view of the village—streets, houses, and *Mairie*. The photograph shows to advantage the high ground on which the place stands, these uplands being in the nature of a spur projecting from Vimy Ridge. Vimy and Petit Vimy lie within 4 km. to the north-east, while 2 km. due east is Thélus.

was about 250 yards, and as the *Vindictive* forged ahead it was reduced to a mere fifty yards or so.[1] In this inferno the *Vindictive* suffered terribly, though her very proximity to the Mole gave her a certain amount of protection, causing most of the damage to be limited to her upper works. There, however, the destruction was such as seriously to threaten the chance of the stormers' success. Several of the gangways were shot away, others were so damaged as to be incapable of use. More serious still were the casualties amongst those to whom the leadership of the stormers had been entrusted. Captain Halahan, R.N., who was to lead the seamen, was killed, and the same fate befell Lieutenant-Colonel Elliot of the Royal Marines, and Major Cordner, his second in command. These officers, eager to be able to land their men without a moment's delay, had stationed themselves on the forecastle and the bridge, where they were of course exposed to the tornado of fire which came from the German guns. The casualties to the crew were no less serious. The gun's crews of the 7·5-inch howitzers were nearly all killed, and the guns themselves put out of action.

[1] A petty officer at one of the *Vindictive's* 6-inch guns stated afterwards that the range (reckoning from the gun muzzle) decreased to "about three feet"!

Under a Hail of Fire

From an armoured shelter, high up on the port side of the uppermost deck, Captain Carpenter was conning his ship. The din was ear-splitting. Every German gun that would bear was apparently trained on the upper works of the *Vindictive*, and she was being hit every few seconds. The original intention had been to lay the ship about seventy yards beyond the battery, almost under the very muzzles of the enemy guns, but when the *Vindictive* was actually brought alongside the Mole she had passed about three hundred yards beyond her assigned position. Of the two anchors which were to be let go forward, one—the starboard anchor—jammed, but the port anchor was dropped and the *Vindictive* was allowed to fall astern—that is nearer to the German battery—till a hundred yards of cable had been veered.

It was now St. George's Day, for the hour was one minute past midnight. The *Vindictive* was almost dead on time, for she was but sixty seconds out of her schedule. But although with amazing punctuality she now found herself alongside the Mole the difficulty of landing the storming parties was for the moment insurmountable. The *Vindictive*, though actually alongside, would not "stay put"—as a layman might clumsily express it. An east-going tide was racing past, and in the confined space between the vessel's hull and the sheer wall of the Mole it was like a mill race. The *Vindictive*, in spite of

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

THE MAIN STREET—SUCH AS IT IS

The Canadian association with this part of the world continued long after the Battle of Arras and Vimy fought in April, 1917; and the Arras battle of March 28th, 1918, found Neuville-St. Vaast occupied by the Canadian 8th Brigade. The 3rd Canadian Division, of which this brigade formed part, had just been transferred from the Canadian Corps to the XIII Corps. Its two other brigades were both in the front line during the fighting.

skilled juggling with propellers and with rudder, swung now this way and now that. The ship, too, was rolling considerably, and this combination of circumstances made it impossible to use the gangways by which the storming parties were to rush the Mole.

The difficulty had of course been foreseen. It had been arranged that the *Daffodil*—one of the Liverpool ferry-boats—should push the *Vindictive* against the Mole. But the *Daffodil* was at the moment lost, for some while previously, as a result of the parting of the towing hawsers, both she and the *Iris* had dropped behind. It was a trying moment for those in the *Vindictive*, but in about four minutes the *Daffodil* was seen approaching at right angles, exactly according to plan. Her commanding officer, Lieutenant H. G. Campbell, pushed the nose of his ship against the *Vindictive's* side and shoved the old cruiser bodily against the Mole. The work was done with great skill and coolness; "only a fine seaman could have manœuvred a ferry-boat with such wonderful precision at a moment of such confusion."[1] A few minutes later the *Iris* passed ahead of the *Vindictive* with her quota of stormers and began to anchor alongside the Mole.

"Storm the Mole!"

From the *Vindictive* the two forward gangways—all that were now in action—were instantly lowered. The order was at once passed, "Storm the Mole!" The leaders lay dead; but in war no man is indispensable. An officer falls; the next senior takes his place; command passes instantaneously and to the full. Lieutenant-Commander B. F. Adams led the first of the seamen storming parties up the narrow swaying gangways to a narrow parapet which topped the Mole proper. Three Marine storming platoons followed at their heels, each under a subaltern.[1]

The storming of the Mole was to be very largely a diversion, that is to say an attempt to distract the attention of the German battery on the Mole from the movements of the block-ships whose duty it was to seal up the entrance of the canal which led to Bruges. These now began to play their magnificent part. While the *Vindictive* was rolling and plunging against the outer face of the Mole, with her upper works and funnels being blasted to destruction at point-blank range, and with a crashing din resounding as if all Hell had been unloosed, and while the stormers—to whose deeds we will return later—were fiercely engaged, Captain Carpenter could see a sight that showed him that his old cruiser had not suffered in vain. Looking over the Mole he could make out six funnels moving steadily on.

[1] *Official History of the War. Naval Operations*, v .p. 257.

[1] Lieutenants T. F. V. Cooke, C. D. R. Lamplough, and H. A. P. de Berry.

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Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

"LEST WE FORGET"

We are not likely to forget, either the 1914 landing or the 1918. This rough memorial was traced by a Marine at the end of the Mole, before he and his colleagues departed after storming it on April 23rd, 1918. Eight months prior to this raid—on August 22nd, 1917—a number of Dover coastal motor-boats had been sent to Zeebrugge, where they fired torpedoes at the German destroyers moored on the inner side of the Mole.

The block-ships. He at once hurried below to the crowded dressing-stations and gave this welcome news, to be answered by round after round of cheering from the crowds of wounded and dying men around him.

Last Voyage of the *Thetis*

Of the three block-ships, that of the senior officer[1]—the *Thetis*—had been leading the way. At about twenty minutes past midnight, in the light of rockets fired from the stern of the *Vindictive*, she made out the lighthouse on the Mole. Rounding the lighthouse she at once came under fire, but only from light pieces, for the German heavy guns were fully occupied with the *Vindictive* and her stormers. In her progress she ran foul of some nets which had been placed as an obstruction, but continued to forge ahead, taking the nets with her. Her engines now brought up, and Commander Sneyd signalled to the *Intrepid* and *Iphigenia* to pass to starboard of him. Meanwhile it seemed as if the *Thetis* was sinking, her hull having been pierced several times by German shells, but after some delay it was found possible to start her starboard engine again. It was, however, soon clear that the *Thetis* was settling down, and her commander therefore cleared the boiler rooms, sent the boat keepers to the boats, ordered the smoke to be turned on and the ship to be abandoned. The ship was then definitely sunk by the detonation of the charges near her keel. The ship's company manned the one remaining cutter and managed to reach Motor Launch *526* which was lying near at hand.

Commander R. S. Sneyd.

Following the *Thetis* came the *Intrepid*. Instead of the assigned crew of 54 officers and men she was actually carrying a complement of 87, owing to the circumstances related earlier in the text—a matter not without its serious side, for the rescue arrangements had been drawn up on the basis of the smaller number. On approaching the Mole she came under heavy shrapnel fire, but the tearing away of the obstruction nets by the *Thetis* had rendered the passage easier for the *Intrepid*, and so that vessel and the *Iphigenia* passed on unimpeded. Lieutenant Bonham-Carter took his ship on until she was well past the piers at the entrance of the canal, and to such extent were the *Vindictive* and *Thetis* drawing the fire of the enemy that the *Intrepid* was now practically unmolested. When she was well inside the canal her commander put his helm hard a-starboard and turned his engines so as to bring the ship athwart the channel, and ordered the crew to the boats. He then blew out the bottom of the ship, which sank immediately. One cutter full of men pulled out to seaward to be picked up by the same motor launch which had rescued the crew of the *Thetis*. Another cutter with her complement was picked up by the destroyer *Whirlwind*.

An Over-zealous Lifebuoy

Last to leave—on a raft—were the commander, his second-in-command, the navigator, and a petty officer. An awkward incident now occurred; a lifebuoy had inadvertently been left on the raft and, on touching the water, it automatically lit up with a tremendous flare, as it was meant to do. But not in circumstances such as these. There never was such a conscientious lifebuoy: nothing would induce it to cease illuminating the whole harbour. They even tried sitting on it, but to no avail; the infernal thing just would keep on blazing. Some German machine-gunners saw their chance and kept whipping up the water with bullets. But Fortune favoured the brave, and the little party managed to reach the motor boat unscathed.

The *Iphigenia* had been following the *Intrepid*, and as she approached the piers came into a thick bank of smoke. When it cleared, her commander found that a dredger and barge were right in his track; the ship struck the connecting hawser and severed it and, as the smoke lifted, the *Intrepid* was sighted ahead. Lieutenant Billyard-Leake manœuvred his vessel towards a gap between the sunken *Intrepid* and the eastern side of the canal, but in so doing collided with her, and his own ship was for the moment out of control. As he cleared his consort another pall of smoke came down and the *Iphigenia* had to be manœuvred in pitch darkness. But her commander managed to place her athwart the canal, when he blew the charges and sank the ship, the crew being taken off the cutter by the Motor Launch *282*.

Nobly had the block-ships performed their duty. Thanks to the resolution and self-sacrifice of the storming parties from the *Vindictive*, *Daffodil*, and *Iris* they had been fortunate enough to escape with very few casualties. The technical skill shown by the three officers in command had been of very high order. "Perhaps the finest feat of all," wrote Captain Carpenter, "was the splendid display of seamanship in the face of extraordinary difficulty. The complete absence of local knowledge, the opposition of the enemy, and the unavoidable lack of practice in sink-

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ing vessels under such conditions all combined to make the task appear quite impracticable. Yet all difficulties were surmounted and the object of the operation was achieved."[1] In his despatch Sir Roger Keyes stated, "I regarded the chances of escape from any of the blocking ships as very slender, and this was well known to those who so readily volunteered for this hazardous service and to the volunteer crews of the motor launches who ran equal risks in their work of rescue."

The Signal of Success

When Captain Carpenter of the *Vindictive* came on deck again after telling the wounded and dying that the block-ships were in, he saw a tremendous flash leap skyward on the Mole between him and the land. Obviously it was from some explosion, but so fearful was the din that no sound of this particular detonation reached his ears. But he knew well what it meant. A great success had been scored, and the man responsible for it was to be awarded the Victoria Cross, an honour which Captain Carpenter himself was destined to receive.

It will be remembered that in the armada which had sailed from England were two obsolescent submarines—*C1* and *C3*. The hawser towing the former had broken and, proceeding under her own power, she had unfortunately dropped behind. The other boat, however, under Lieutenant R. D. Sandford, was slipped at the appointed time and made her way into the waters of Zeebrugge.

A few minutes later the viaduct connecting the Mole proper with the land showed up clearly against a glare in the background, and towards it Lieutenant Sandford steered his craft. The submarine had already been sighted by the enemy, and some fire had been directed upon her, but now as she moved head-on towards the iron piers and lattice-work, at a speed of about ten knots, the firing ceased and she was allowed to approach almost unhampered. It has been suggested that the Germans on the viaduct believed that the submarine was either "blinded" or out of control and that, if she were to entangle herself in the ironwork of the viaduct, she could be easily captured and salved. Like the trusting Trojans of old, those simple-minded defenders thought that here was "easy meat": a wooden horse that was well worth admitting. The submarine collided with the viaduct right enough—wedged herself firmly in it up to the conning tower. But then came a terrific blinding flash, a roar that baffles description; and a moment later girders, railway lines, lattice-work, and dismembered Germans rained down from the sky.

[1] Carpenter, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

The Blowing-up of the Viaduct

The submarine was not out on "lawful" submarine work. She was just full to the brim with high explosives, and the destruction of the viaduct was her mission. The plan was that, when she approached the structure, she was to be abandoned by her small complement of two officers and four men, and the gyroscopic apparatus with which she was fitted was to be set in operation to steer her straight for her target, when the time fuses would blow her up. But Lieutenant Sandford was not going to rely on any gadgets, gyroscopic or otherwise. There was nothing like ramming the target—even though the risk, appalling enough in all conscience, was increased about fourfold. So the submarine was driven straight into the network of horizontal and diagonal girders and braces until she was brought up by her conning tower.

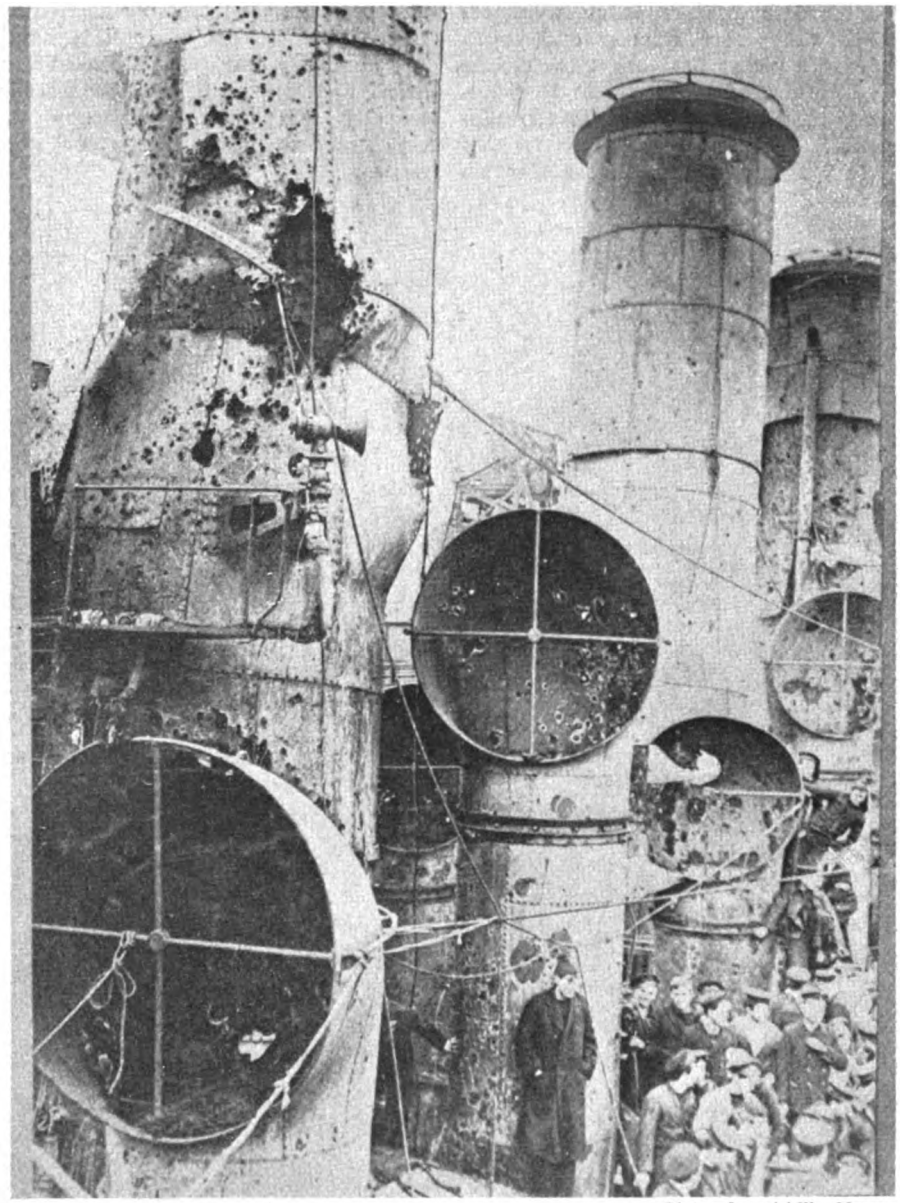

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTER THE FIGHT

H.M.S. *Vindictive* after Zeebrugge, showing some of the extensive damage received, most of which was occasioned by the old ship's duel with the shore battery. The *Vindictive's* War career ended when she was sunk as a block-ship at Ostend on May 10th, 1918. It had begun on August 6th, 1914, when, under the command of Admiral de Robeck, she had captured the Norddeutscher-Lloyd steamship *Schlesien* off Cape Ortegal.

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The crew were at once ordered into a small motor skiff carried by the submarine. Lieutenant Sandford lit the fuses and then joined the remainder of his party. It was imperative to get away as quickly as possible, not only on account of the impending explosion, but also because the enemy had switched on a searchlight, and were now firing on the skiff with rifles, pom-poms, and machine guns. But her propeller had been seriously damaged, and it was necessary to paddle frantically with oars, carried for emergency. However, the viaduct blew up all right, but not before the skiff had been hit again and again and Lieutenant Sandford had been twice wounded. Then they were rescued and taken aboard a picket boat under the charge of Lieutenant-Commander F. H. Sandford, brother of the hero of the submarine.

It was stated later that a German cyclist corps was hurriedly sent from the shore to reinforce the Mole garrison and, unaware of the destruction of the viaduct, had plunged headlong into the sea—thus, as Captain Carpenter rather unkindly puts it, "infringing the Gadarene copyright."

The main object of the expedition had now, so far as could be known, been successfully accomplished, for two of the block-ships were lying fairly and squarely sunk in the entrance of the canal. The subsidiary venture was the destruction of the viaduct. Of the success of that there could be no doubt whatever. Great as were the risks incurred, the casualties had been almost incredibly small (the *Intrepid* had but one man killed). But this immunity had been purchased at a price, and the price was the terrible casualty roll in the diversion on the Mole, to which the story now returns.

A Difficult Task

When the first stormers reached the Mole—as has been told earlier in this narrative—it was at once clear that the task of rushing the battery at the head of the Mole was impossible. Instead of being almost alongside the battery, as had been the intention, the *Vindictive* had come to rest some distance beyond it, and the stormers now found that they were separated from their objective by machine guns behind a formidable entanglement of barbed wire. All that could be done was to form a strong-point from which the stormers could continue to distract the attention of the battery, and to proceed with such work of demolition as could be carried out.

There were deeds of heroism performed in that bloody hour that ushered in St. George's Day which will live for ever in the stirring records of the British Navy.

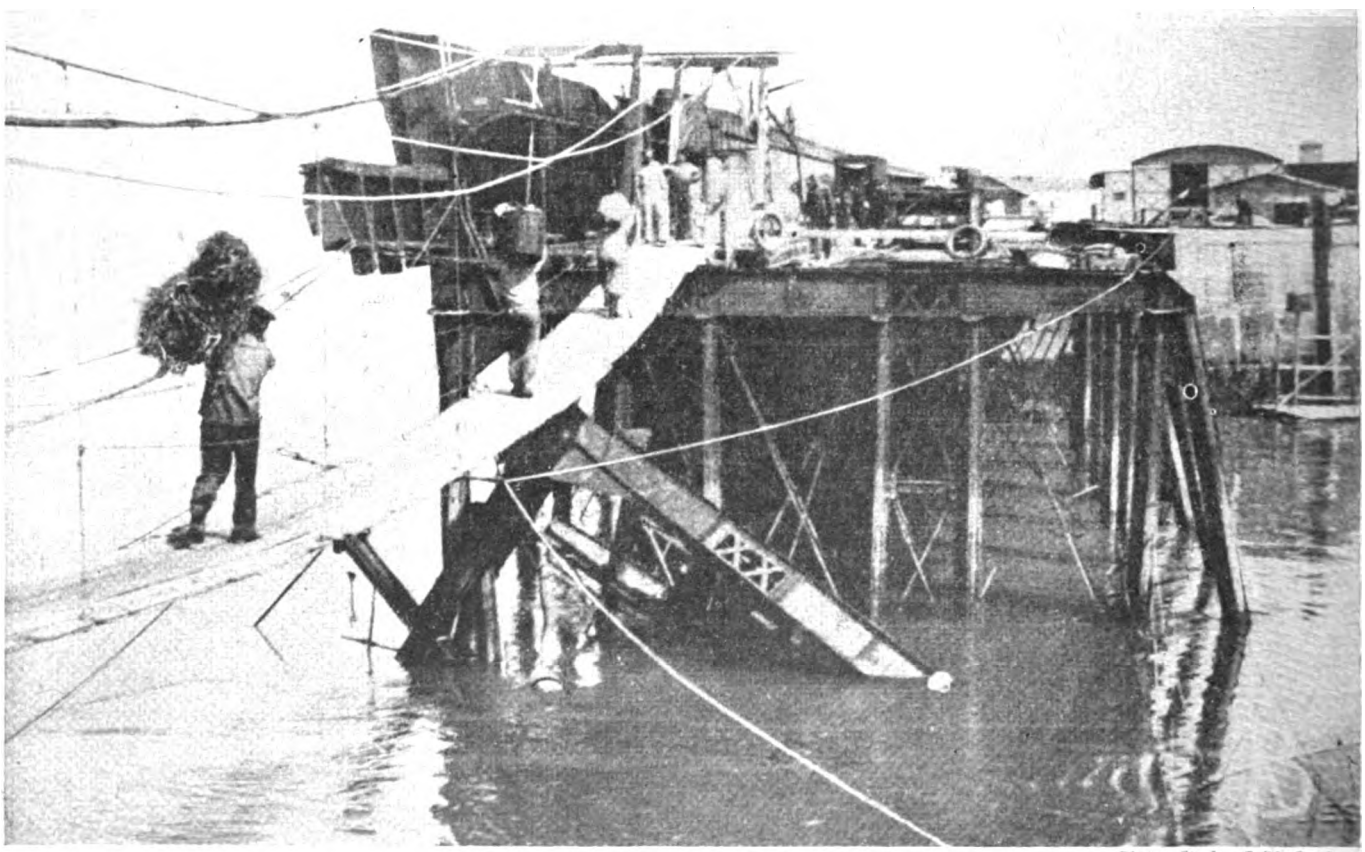

Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

The handiwork of the submarine *C3* is well illustrated here, for the photograph shows the gap in the railway viaduct leading on to the Mole, where the *C3* had rammed the girders and blown up. The enemy, with his usual resolution, did not long suffer the Mole to be so cut off; and within a few hours of the departure of the raiders he had rigged up the temporary bridge which German sailors are here seen crossing.

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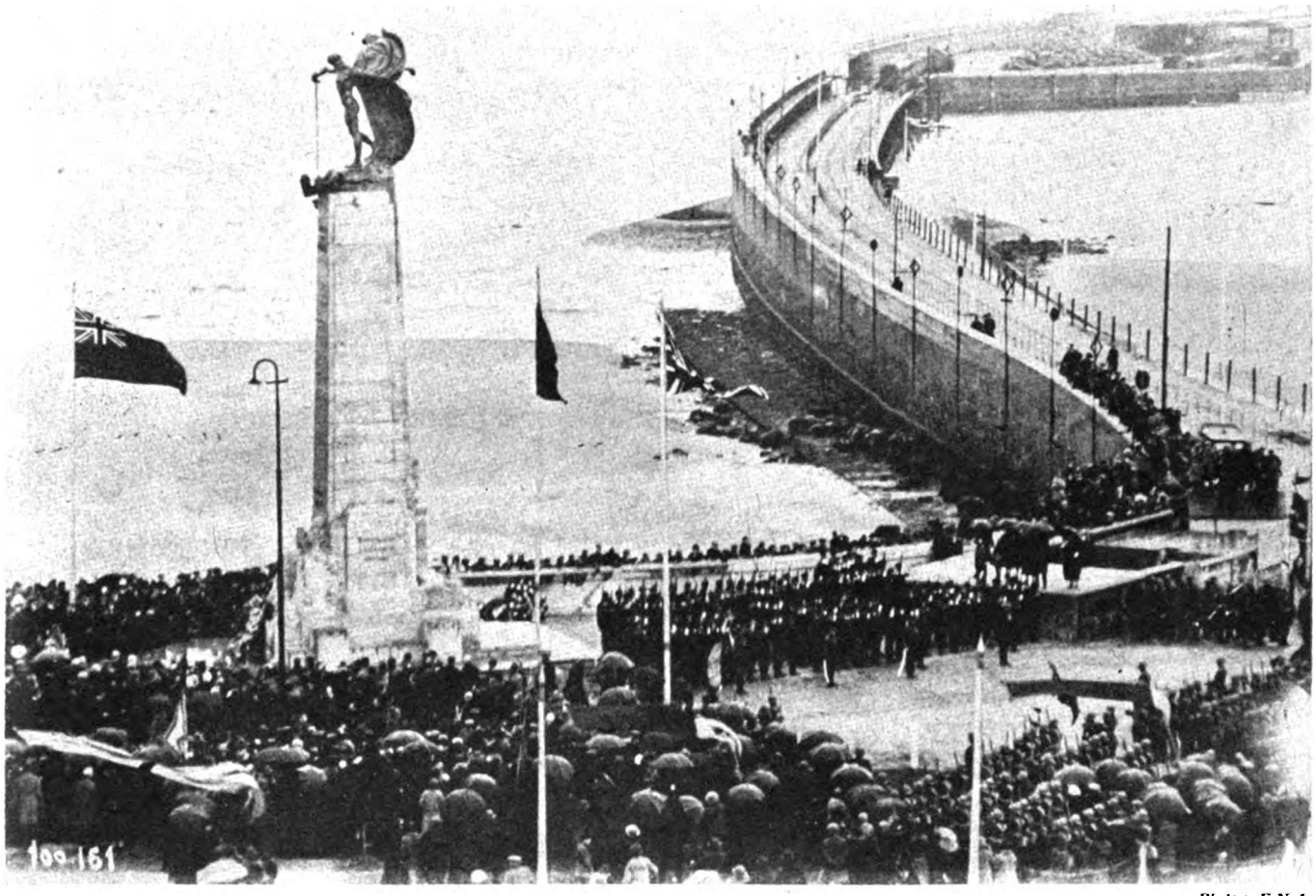

Photo: E.N.A.

THE ZEEBRUGGE MEMORIAL

A photograph of part of the Mole, together with the memorial erected in honour of those who fell during the enterprise of April 23rd, 1918, and in commemoration of the exploit itself. An inscription reads: "In Memory of St. George's Day, 1918, when every moment had its deed and every deed its hero." In addition to this monument, there is a much smaller one, in Zeebrugge churchyard, dedicated to the memory of three British officers and one mechanic who fell on the Mole, and whose bodies were never recovered.

When Captain Halahan had been killed, the command of the seamen storming party had passed to Lieutenant-Commander Harrison, but he was struck senseless by a splinter of a shell. It was therefore the next in the chain of command, Lieutenant-Commander Adams, on whom the honour of leading the stormers had devolved. But when Harrison recovered consciousness he made his way up one of the gangways to the Mole and took over his command. Gathering together a handful of men he led a charge along the narrow parapet itself in the face of heavy machine-gun fire. His charge down the narrow gangway of death was a worthy finale to the large number of charges which, as a forward of the first rank, he had led down many a Rugby football ground. He had "played the game" to the end.[1]

A posthumous award of the Victoria Cross was made to this most gallant officer, and the same high honour was conferred on Able-Seaman McKenzie who, finding himself alone, did splendid work with his machine gun though wounded himself in several places. Another Victoria Cross was deservedly won by Captain Bamford of the Royal Marines, who led an assault on the German positions covering the Mole Battery.

A Solitary Survivor

Nevertheless, twenty minutes after the *Vindictive* had been put alongside, the position was precarious and dangerous to a degree.[1] The difficulties of sending reinforcements to the Mole were immense. The *Vindictive* was receiving terrible punishment, and her foretop, in which were two pom-poms and six Lewis guns manned by a party of Royal Marine Artillerymen, had been put out of action. Only one man remained alive, Sergeant N. A. Finch, and he continued to fire his gun with bitter resolution till he too was struck down.[1] It was about this time that Captain Carpenter, as related earlier, was cheered by the sight of the six funnels of the block-ships passing steadily into the harbour.

Meanwhile, the *Iris* with her stormers was in serious difficulty. It was found impossible to grapple the parapet of the Mole with her special anchors. Heroic efforts were made by her officers. Lieutenant Hawkings contrived to place a scaling ladder as soon as the ship came alongside and scrambled up it. But as the ship surged away he was left alone, and when he was last seen he was defending himself with his revolver. Lieutenant-Commander Bradford now performed an act of desperate courage. Seeing that the anchor could not be

[1] Carpenter, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 215. *Official History*, v, p. 259.

[1] Sergeant Finch was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A ROAD IN ALBERT

The Albert end of the celebrated Albert—Bapaume road has been illustrated in more than one "Then and Now" pair of pictures, but here for the first time we show a street in the heart of the town. It is the Rue Félix Faure as it appeared to British troops on August 22nd, 1918—the day of the town's recapture by the 8th East Surreys of the 18th Division.

made to catch he scrambled up the derrick and lowered himself down to it. Leaping thence to the parapet he placed the anchor, but, struck down by a storm of machine-gun bullets, he disappeared into the swirling waters below. At about ten minutes to one the question of withdrawal had to be considered. The primary object of the raid had been achieved and, even after the recall had been ordered, considerable time must elapse before the surviving stormers, including the wounded, could be got on board from the Mole. As both sirens of the *Vindictive* had been shot away, the *Daffodil* was ordered to sound the signal. Captain Carpenter kept his ship alongside for twenty-five minutes longer, and did not make for open water until the stormers had, for several minutes, ceased coming on board. Practically all the wounded were rescued, many of the ship's company assisting in carrying them over the crazy gangways. One marine carried a disabled man on board, placed his charge down on the deck, kissed him on both cheeks, and muttered "I wasn't going to leave you, Bill."

The Last Cheer of the Battle

Admiral Keyes, in the *Warwick*, having seen the storm-ships withdrawing, and having followed them for a few minutes, stood in again towards the Mole to cover the retirement of the small craft. The motor launch under Lieutenant Dean which had done such splendid work, and was now crowded with 101 persons, the whole—the wounded, the dying, and the dead—of the block-ships' personnel, now sighted the *Warwick* and steered towards her to transfer her freight. As the overloaded launch staggered towards the destroyer, the men gave their admiral a greeting of round after round of cheers. Their shout of triumph was amongst the last sounds of the battle, for the swarm of ships that had appeared off the coast some two hours earlier was now fast disappearing homeward in the darkness.

These flat words, and the imperfect sentences that have been written above, cannot pretend to be aught else than a mere arid summary of a vivid and imperishable tale. It is enough to say that the attempt to seal up this lair of German submarines was carried out with a courage and resource, with an ingenuity of conception and a thoroughness of execution, worthy of the highest traditions of the British Navy. Of it a French Minister of Marine declared that "it was the finest feat of arms in the naval history of all times and of all countries."[1]

[1] Admiral Fournier. See *The Times*, May 13th, 1918.

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We must now go back some hours to the time of the " parting of the ways," when the main body pushed on towards Zeebrugge and a detachment vanished in the darkness heading for Ostend. The attempt to block that harbour failed—through no fault of the officers and men taking part in it. On one of the rehearsals, that of April 11th, an untoward incident had occurred, and it is to that incident that the failure is almost certainly due.

When the expedition returned to its anchorage (on 12th April) one coastal motor boat—No. 33—was found to be missing. No explanation of the casualty could be given, nor has it ever been exactly discovered why or how the boat fell into the enemy's hands. The loss was more serious than anybody knew at the time, for on board this captured motor boat the Germans discovered papers and diagrams which showed them that a blocking expedition had been planned against Ostend, and gave them a good deal of knowledge about the practical details of its execution.[1]

The Fiasco at Ostend

The first point at which the Ostend expedition aimed was the Stroom Bank buoy which would enable it to fix its position and ensure a comparatively easy piece of navigation to Ostend. The entrance to the harbour was to be reached at the same minute that the *Vindictive* was to come alongside the Mole at Zeebrugge, that is at midnight precisely. At 11.20 p.m. the six monitors began their bombardment, and at ten minutes before midnight the small craft detailed for the purpose duly emitted their smoke screen. The Stroom Bank buoy was found by the block-ships, but it was now a false guide, for the Germans had moved it a mile and a half from its proper position. Here, as at Zeebrugge, the unfortunate change in the direction of the wind blew back the smoke in the faces of the raiders, and in these circumstances the navigators were unable to take such bearings as would have revealed the false position of the buoy. Taking it as accurate, the block-ships steered a course, based on the buoy's normal position, with the result that they drove ashore well to the eastward of the harbour entrance. The *Brilliant*, which was leading, observing breakers where the Ostend pier should have been, starboarded her helm but too late to avoid grounding. The *Sirius* following astern collided with her consort.

The news of the failure at Ostend was very disconcerting to Sir Roger Keyes.

[1] This paragraph is transcribed *verbatim* from the *Official History of the War: Naval Operations*, v, p. 252.

Photo: Keystone.

SWEPT AND GARNISHED

Long before its locality had become familiar to the B.E.F., Albert had lent its name to one of those hard-fought but little-talked-of battles of the War's earliest months. This First Battle of Albert was waged between September 20th and 30th—or, more strictly speaking, September 25th and 29th—1914, and involved, on the Allied side, the French divisions under the command of Général de Castelnau. The latter's retreat may in some ways be compared with General Gough's 3½ years later.

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One of the two orifices still remained open, and so long as that condition existed the gallant work at Zeebrugge might almost be written off. He therefore lost no time in informing the Admiralty that he proposed to endeavour to block Ostend with the *Vindictive* during the next four days. Time was now in a very real sense the essence of the problem, for the nights were becoming shorter and darkness was above all things essential. This time the Germans were pretty certain to be on the alert.

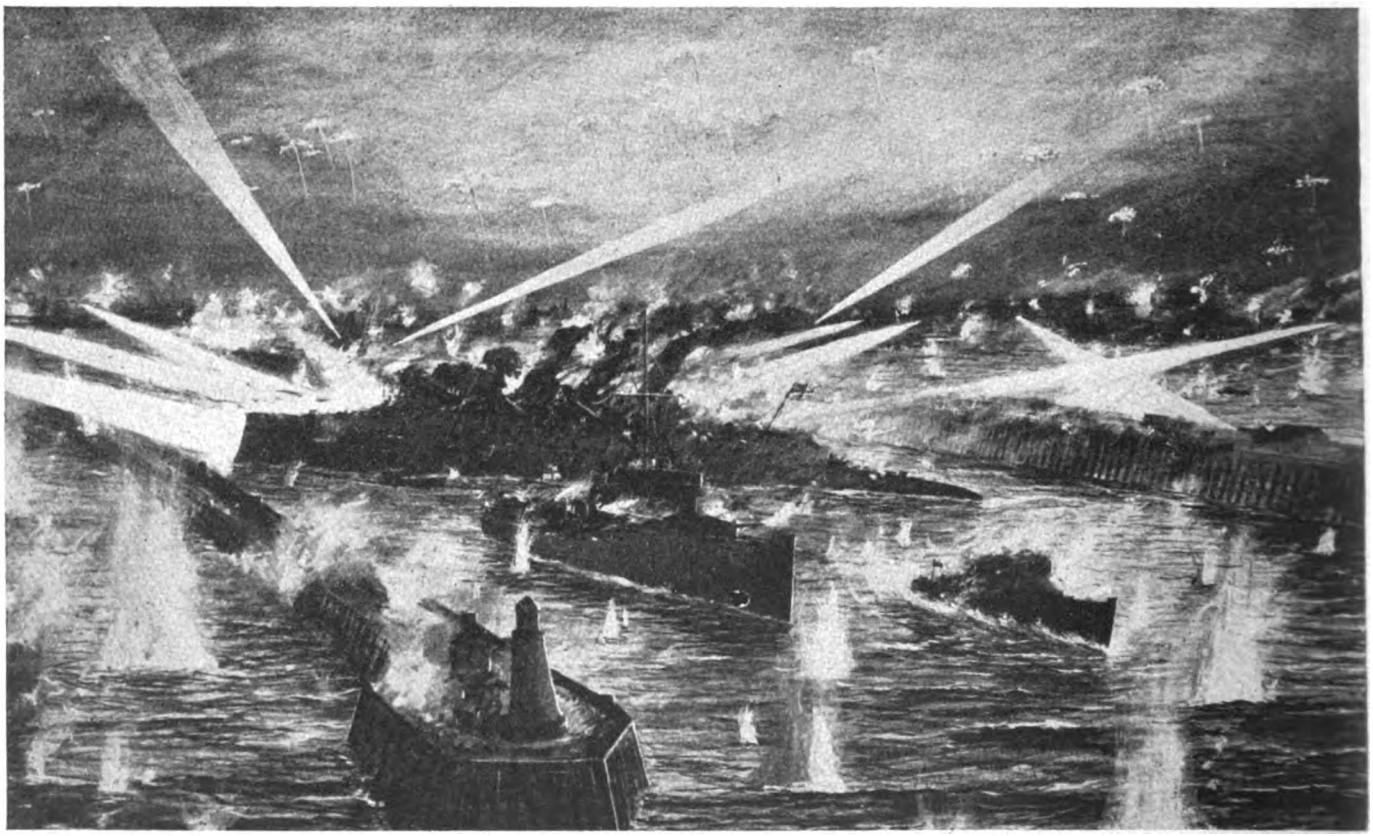
The necessary patching up of the old *Vindictive* was indeed completed in time, but then bad weather intervened. It became necessary to defer the expedition until May 9th or 14th, when the tide would be suitable. The officers of the sunken light cruisers *Brilliant* and *Sirius*, which had had such bad luck in the previous attempt, begged to be employed, and those who had been in the *Brilliant* were selected. The delay caused by the postponement enabled, however, another old light cruiser, the *Sappho*, to be fitted out as a block-ship, and to their great delight the officers from the *Sirius* were posted to her. The old engine-room staff of the *Vindictive* pleaded their intimate knowledge of the cruiser's engines and were accepted for her last commission. Crews presented no difficulty, for volunteers from the Dover Patrol and the naval barracks in Chatham came forward in abundance.

The Ill-luck Persists

On May 8th everything was ready, and Commodore Lynes, in charge of the operation—he had carried out the direction of the former attack—issued a stirring appeal to his force. The next day he and Sir Roger Keyes were lunching at Belgian headquarters. After lunch Sir Roger noticed that the wind had shifted to the northward—the right quarter. Both he and the commodore hurried back to Dunkirk by car, and from there Sir Roger proceeded to Dover to take command of the destroyer division with which he intended to cover the operation. As before, he flew his flag in the destroyer *Warwick*.

After dark the block-ships and the smaller craft set out towards Ostend, but at once the bad luck which had dogged the previous venture proved that it was still to continue. A message from the Air Force told him that the Germans had removed all the buoys off Ostend. Then, hardly had the block-ships left Dunkirk when the *Sappho* blew out a man-hole joint in the side of her boiler. Her speed dropped at once to six knots, and any participation by her in the enterprise was now out of the question. The weather conditions were, however, at the moment so favourable that the commodore resolved to carry on, and he signalled to Commander Godsal in the *Vindictive* that he had every confidence that the commander would do his best without the *Sappho*.

For a time all went well. By half-past-one on the morning of May 10th all preliminary dispositions were completed and the small craft steamed inshore towards Ostend to carry out their several duties. The Germans were evidently on the alert, for rockets and a searchlight were employed by them. But their defences were now under a hot fire from the monitors out at sea and from the heavy guns at Dunkirk, while a couple of coastal motor boats torpedoed the piers, and aeroplanes dropped their



Photographed from the original by Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

APPROACHING OSTEND PIER

Another depiction, in superlative terms, of an incident during the Zeebrugge—Ostend affair. In this more-than-vivid study the artist has sought to perpetuate his impression of the moment when the old and now scarred *Vindictive* was being manœuvred alongside Ostend pier preparatory to being sunk there. The vessel was sent to the harbour bottom on May 10th, 1918. Ostend New Communal Cemetery, which was used by the Germans from October, 1914, to October, 1918, contains a number of her fallen.

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Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.

SUNK—YET STILL DOING HER DUTY

That a ship should continue to perform her expected duty even when resting on the seabed is something which even Nelson can scarcely have envisaged. Here we see H.M.S. *Vindictive* lying beside the pier of Ostend harbour after being sunk. She was afterwards raised by the Salvage Staff. The total casualties sustained in the Zeebrugge—Ostend operations were heavy, amounting to 637 officers and men, of whom 197 were killed and 27 reported missing.

bombs. All this volume of fire was for the purpose of assisting the *Vindictive* on her run into the harbour. Punctually at 2 a.m. the old ship arrived at the point where she expected to make the entrance. Then a thick mist enfolded her and nothing could be seen.

Commander Godsal could do nothing but cruise about hoping, though in vain, for the fog to lift. The entrance at length was sighted, and a million-candle-power flare was touched off by one of the motor boats. The *Vindictive* was now under a very heavy fire. Commander Godsal went outside the conning-tower to get a better view, but he was immediately killed by a shell, and at the same time the navigator was rendered unconscious. Lieutenant Crutchley at once took command, but the ship was in the wrong position and grounded forward on the eastern side of the channel. After trying fruitlessly to work the stern of the ship across the fairway, Lieutenant Crutchley sank the *Vindictive*. She lay obliquely across the channel but by no means blocking it.

Gallant and Glorious Failure

There was nothing more to be done but to take off the survivors and to recall all the units of the expedition. Everything that courage, foresight, self-sacrifice, and determination could achieve had been performed. The attempt had unfortunately resulted in failure, but a failure that was as gallant as it was glorious.

With the definite failure of the second attempt to seal up Ostend the value of the success at Zeebrugge was, as has been pointed out, much diminished. Still, there was the consolation that the route which was far the better of the two had been closed and that the *Intrepid* and *Iphigenia* would present an almost impassable obstacle to submarines. This consolation persisted for long after the war, and Captain Carpenter in his narrative[1] published in 1921 declared, "I believe that no torpedo craft or submarines could use the exit for a considerable time and that about five months elapsed before they could enter or leave the canal at any other period than the top of high tide. . . . One may truly remark that the canal was 'well and truly' blocked." But it was not until ten years later that the appropriate volume of the *Official History*[1] appeared, and during those years a further mass of evidence had become available. The fact is that, two days after the raid, a submarine put out to sea past the block-ships at Zeebrugge. "On the 27th, entries and exits were made partly by Zeebrugge and partly Ostend, after which the average number of sailings and arrivals was maintained. These facts were unknown to our authorities at the time."

But, in a later passage, the official historian has more comforting words.[2] Admittedly the two great operations against the Flanders ports must be judged by their effect on the German submarine campaign. "The effect was this. Previous to the operation, about two submarines were entering or leaving the Flanders bases every day; during

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 268, 269.

[1] Vol. v, p. 265.
[2] *Ibid.*, v, p. 274.

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the week after the operation this figure was maintained; for eleven Flanders submarines went to sea or returned between April 24th and the end of the month. In May there were fifty-six entries and exits, so that the average figure of nearly two passages a day was maintained during the five weeks immediately subsequent to the operation." The historian then goes on to point out that thereafter the figures began to show a marked decline and sets himself to investigate the cause. "The submarine commanders were reporting that the passage of the Dover Straits was becoming increasingly difficult and hazardous.... But if the patrol in the Dover Straits was so dangerous and difficult to pass, the German remedy was patent; a new succession of those destroyer raids which their destroyer commanders had always conducted with such energy and precision. Yet the remedy was never attempted. Why? The explanation can only be that Zeebrugge was no longer as easy of access as a *destroyer*[1]

[1] Italics not in original.

base must be if it is to be a starting- and returning-point for raiding forces."

Of the moral effect produced in this country it would be impossible to say too much of the raids on Zeebrugge and Ostend. Coming as they did at a moment of intense anxiety as regards the situation on the Western Front, where it seemed at one time as if the Germans had risen with a new and unnatural strength, they braced the moral tone of the nation. And the nation, so fiercely proud of its Navy—and so frankly puzzled by the indecisive result of Jutland—thrilled at the tidings of the superb courage, the daring, and the discipline which have added Zeebrugge and Ostend to the famous names which tell of the glory of the British Navy.

Over half a century before this epic of Zeebrugge, a cavalry charge at Balaklava had made the whole world wonder. Yet in comparing the two exploits, the Army will not forget that in the Charge of the Light Brigade there were the thrill and excitement which came from speed; the *élan* inseparable from accelerated movement; the "Walk March" followed instantly by the "Trot," which without any formal order passed to the canter, to the gallop, and then to the whirlwind of the "Charge"; and the noble emulation of regiments, racing forward in three lines, which caused a light dragoon to shout out to his rear rank man, "Come on! Don't let those ——s of the 17th get in front of us."[1] The whole charge, including the ride down the Valley of Death, the sabring of the Russian gunners at their guns, and the return—"Not the Six Hundred"—was all over in twenty minutes.

The storming of the Mole at Zeebrugge lasted for hours. There was none—and in the circumstances there could be none—of that fierce exultation of closing with the enemy—man to man, cold steel, and the devil take the weakest. Fiercely proud though every soldier feels of the achievement of Cardigan and his squadrons, there is none but will freely admit that Zeebrugge has never been surpassed.

[1] The 13th Light Dragoons and the 17th Lancers formed the first line of the charge.

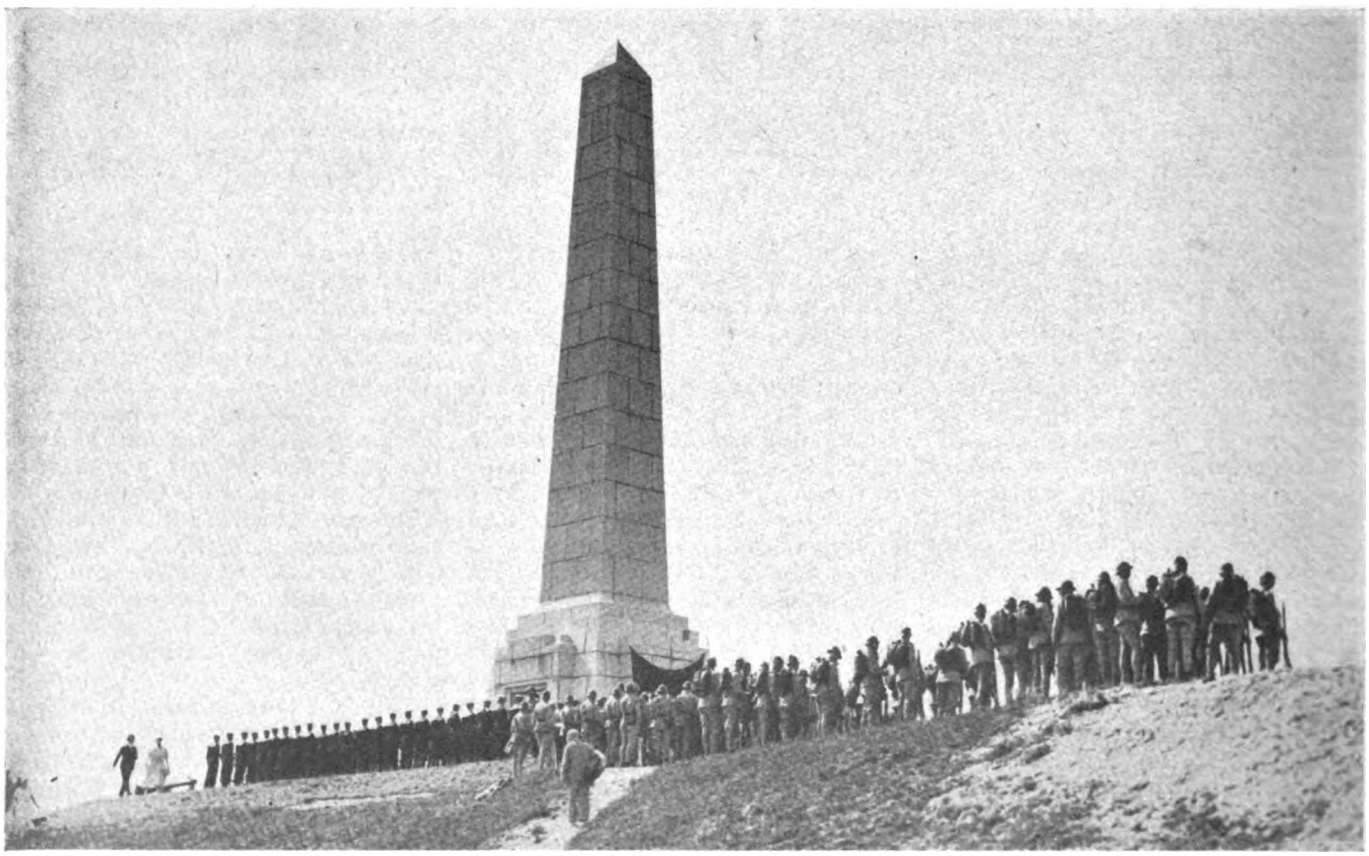

Photo: Central Press.

TO THE MEN OF THE DOVER PATROL

This obelisk stands on the high ground of Cap Blanc-Nez, near Escalles, 9 miles west of Calais on the road to Boulogne. It was erected in memory of "the glorious co-operation of the French Navy in the Dover Patrol, 1914-1919." There is a similar memorial at Dover. The duties of the Patrol were originally to prevent German ships from forcing their way into the Channel, and to search neutrals for contraband. Later on, mine-sweepers and drifters with anti-submarine nets were added, and new duties included safeguarding the transport of troops, and offensive operations against the Belgian coast. Twenty-eight bombardments were carried out, and more than 5,000,000 troops were transported without a single casualty.

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CHAPTER LXXXIII

THE MARNE AND PICARDY

The summer of 1918 found the British troops on the Western Front recovering rapidly from the effects of the alarums and excursions of March and April of that year. Far from being dejected by losses in men, material, and territory, the troops were infected by a spirit of optimism such as had not been present since the early days of the Great War. Many were tired, but all were determined. It was recognised that the enemy was becoming war-weary. The present chapter covers a most critical period—those days of high summer among which must be numbered August 8th, "the black day of the German Army."

When Ludendorff called a halt to the battle of the Lys on April 29th, he by no means relinquished the main object which he had had in view when he opened the offensive in March—namely, the destruction of the British Army. He recognised, however, that the strong French reinforcements which had reached the northern area effectively deprived him of any prospect of attaining his object in the immediate future. Before he could resume his attacks on Haig with any hope of victory, he must clearly bring about a change in the distribution of the Allied reserves. Having shaken up the line elsewhere, and having thus attracted French and perhaps British reserves southwards, he might seek later, by a secret and sudden stroke, to complete the work begun on the Somme and the Lys and gain the Channel ports.

A Region of Repose

Casting about for a suitable field for a diversion, he selected the famous Chemin des Dames—the long ridge north of the Aisne where Nivelle's unfortunate attack had brought failure and mutiny to the French Army.

French Headquarters regarded this part of the line as the quietest of quiet sectors. They garrisoned it with second-line troops and chose it as a resting-place and training-ground for battle-worn British divisions sent south to replace French formations transferred to Flanders. These facts did not escape the observation of the German Intelligence Branch, and they appeared to Ludendorff to offer a heaven-sent opportunity for a fresh onslaught.

The British divisions recuperating on the Aisne when the stroke fell were the 21st, 8th, 50th (in the line in that order from right to left) and the 25th (in reserve). The 8th, it will be remembered, came into action on the Somme on March 23rd, and fought most gallantly with the XIX Corps until the end of the retreat. The 21st formed the breakwater at Epéhy, was in the Somme battle from start to finish, and took part in the closing stages of the struggle in Flanders. The 25th helped to stem the onrush of the main German thrust near Bullecourt, where von Below had thrown back the 59th Division, and, after being reduced to a remnant in the Somme battle, was filled up with drafts in time to be nearly annihilated on the Lys. The 50th—the first Territorial division to fight in France, where it was flung on landing into the cauldron of the second Ypres—came up early in the March battle to help Gough, and in April, with the 51st Division, stopped the gap left by the Portuguese. In two battles its losses amounted to 11,000, while those of the 8th Division in the one battle totalled 8,600.

It was intended that these divisions, having just been expanded from mere cadres, should undergo a course of strenuous training behind the line to render them once more fit for battle. They were, however, immediately ordered into the trenches and remained there until the blow fell.

Haig was somewhat disturbed, for his Intelligence Branch was by no means certain that the Aisne front would remain quiet. The French, however, with their complete confidence that no danger need be anticipated in that quarter, stilled his fears for the moment. Curiously enough, at a conference held on May 14th, Major Hubbard—an Intelligence officer of the American army, which had not yet begun to come into the picture—expressed the opinion that the enemy would attack the Chemin des Dames between May 25th and 30th.[1] Where tired divisions were resting and where attack was considered improbable was a most likely area, he thought, to be chosen by an enemy who relied so greatly on surprise. Moreover, the known distribution of the German divisons gave colour to his view. Nevertheless French Headquarters, influenced by the assurances of Duchêne—the commander of the Sixth Army, which included the troops on the Chemin des Dames—remained unconvinced.

[1] Liddell Hart: *A History of the World War*, p. 523.

A Glorious Countryside

On May 7th the British divisions began to relieve their French comrades along the eastern half of the ridge. They were delighted with the peace and beauty of their new home. "To the battered, battle-weary troops, whose only knowledge of France was based on experience of the northern front, the Champagne country in the full glory of spring was a revelation. Gone was the depressing monotony of Flanders, drab and weeping, with its mud and its mist, its pollards and its pavé: gone the battle-wrecked landscapes of Picardy and the Somme, with their shattered villages and blasted woods. Here all was peace. The countryside basked contentedly in the blazing sunshine. Trim villages nestled in quiet hollows beside lazy streams, and tired eyes were refreshed by the sight of rolling hills clad with great woods."[1] Even marks of battle only a year old were covered with a mantle of greenery. The few shells "fired seemed tired, arriving in a leisurely way and exploding apologetically without injury to anyone."[2]

Soon signs and rumours of attack began to multiply. G.H.Q. formally warned French Headquarters of their anxiety as to the situation; but, even on the 25th, Duchêne reported that there were no indications of an immediate attack.

On the 26th, however, two prisoners were captured and gave complete details of the impending assault. It was then 3 p.m. The troops marched to their battle-positions; but the time for preparation was terribly short, for zero

[1] Captain S. Rogerson, 2nd W. Yorks. Quoted in *The Eighth Division* (Bax and Boraston), p. 218.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TABLEAU OF TEMPLEUX

Templeux-la-Fosse lies 7 km. north-east of Péronne, and almost the same distance west-north-west of Roisel. It is just off the Péronne–Gouzeaucourt highroad, on a secondary route leading from Moislains to Tincourt-Boucly. A small lane, indicated by the signboard in the foreground of this illustration, leads northward to Aisecourt-le-Bas. The village was among the several hundred left high and dry by the receding tide of March, 1917, and is here pictured as it looked during the following July.

hour was known to be 1 a.m. on the 27th.

Pétain and his staff, far back at Provins, suffered agonies of suspense. Disaster was threatening, and they could do nothing to obviate it. Reinforcements could not reach the scene of action for several days, and then only by driblets.

Punctually at the expected hour, the German bombardment descended. It was of great density and violence and lasted for 3½ hours. Then, over a front of 20 miles, 15 German divisions, nearly all of them fresh and with 7 more in support, fell upon the Sixth Army, which had 3 French and 3 British divisions in line and 4 French and 1 British in reserve. For the third time in succession, Ludendorff had effected a strategic surprise.

Anglo-French Relations

At this period, our relations with the French were not very cordial. When the heart was taken out of our allies by the mutinies which followed Nivelle's failure, Haig shouldered the whole burden of their protection. He tackled the Germans so vigorously at Messines, Passchendaele and Cambrai that the latter could never find the men to mount a first-class attack on the French. But, in the process, the British forces suffered enormous casualties. Then came the Russian *débâcle*, the release of a million hostile soldiers from the Eastern Front, Ludendorff's decision to employ his new-found strength in an attempt to destroy the British Army, and a simultaneous decision on the part of the Government not to bring that Army up to strength. These factors, and the absence of a general reserve, enabled the Germans to employ overwhelming force, firstly on the Somme and secondly on the Lys against the British troops, forcing the latter to deep and dangerous retreats on both occasions.

That the line held at all in such conditions and that the enemy was eventually repulsed, furnished a striking tribute to the courage and fortitude of the British soldier. But the French, ignoring the sacrifices made on their behalf and the slowness and ineffectiveness of the support they had rendered in the first great emergency, were inclined to adopt a superior attitude and to claim that they alone among the Allies were of fighting metal. General Duchêne, in particular, showed in his manner this galling pretension. Moreover, he insisted not only that the British divisions should go at once into the line, but also that they should crowd their men, their guns and their establishments far forward.

In vain did our divisional commanders, experienced, after months of storm and stress, in German methods, protest that such procedure was suicidal. They pointed out that the proposed

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distribution would entail certain defeat and the annihilation of all troops north of the Aisne.

They wished to hold the Chemin des Dames lightly, to destroy most of the bridges over the Aisne and to make the river the line of resistance. Such action would almost certainly have caused the miscarriage of the German plans; but Duchêne, described by one of his own countrymen as the rudest of men, from his actions revealed as one of the least intelligent, apparently regarded such tactics as chicken-hearted and insisted that not one inch of the sacred soil of France should be abandoned.

A Marked Improvement

After events had witnessed to the truth of the British contention, and after the French themselves had passed beneath the harrow, relations improved to a remarkable degree. Our allies realised and generously acknowledged the difficulties under which we had suffered, and the vital services which we had rendered to the common cause.

The Germans were able to inflict very heavy casualties in their bombardment. For, having had time and opportunity to map every trench and every gun-pit, their fire was exceptionally accurate. They were again favoured by mist; and the men who had experienced their attacks in March and April began to believe that they could call up mist at will.

Accompanied by tanks, they overwhelmed the Outpost Zone, and in less than two hours had broken through a great part of the Battle Zone. They were for long kept at bay by the 8th Division but, by penetrating gaps on either flank, they forced it to withdraw.

Some of the British battalions fought splendidly, the 2nd Northampton and the 1st Worcester especially distinguishing themselves. The 2nd Devon won immortality by a heroic defence. Anderson-Morshead—the commander—took position to hold a crossing over the Aisne. There, very soon, his small force became an island in a hostile sea. "Refusing to surrender and preferring to fight to the last, this glorious battalion perished *en masse*, its losses comprising the C.O., 28 officers and 552 N.C.O.'s and men." [1] This gallant deed earned and won a *Citation* and a *Croix de Guerre*; and General Berthelot, in making the award, stressed the value of the stand made, in that it rendered possible the preparation of a position south of the river. "The whole battalion," he concluded, "had offered their lives in ungrudging sacrifice to the sacred cause."

Another unit which won a *Citation* that day was the 5th Battery, LV Brigade, R.F.A. In spite of a torrential bombardment, it carried out its counter-preparation and then gave covering fire without ever a pause. So long as guns were fit for action they were manned, crews of three being used, the officers taking their turn. At 6.45 a.m., when the hostile barrage lifted, the Germans appeared within 200 yards. They were engaged by the guns firing point-blank, and by the Lewis guns and rifles. Massey, the commander, took a Lewis gun to protect the right flank and was killed. Lieut. Large, though already wounded, worked the other Lewis gun until he was killed. 2nd-Lieut. Button, after destroying maps and records, went to help Massey and was also killed. The battery was then overwhelmed where it stood, 4 men only escaping. "The heroic resistance of the battery," said General Berthelot, "had a great influence on the fate of the battle."

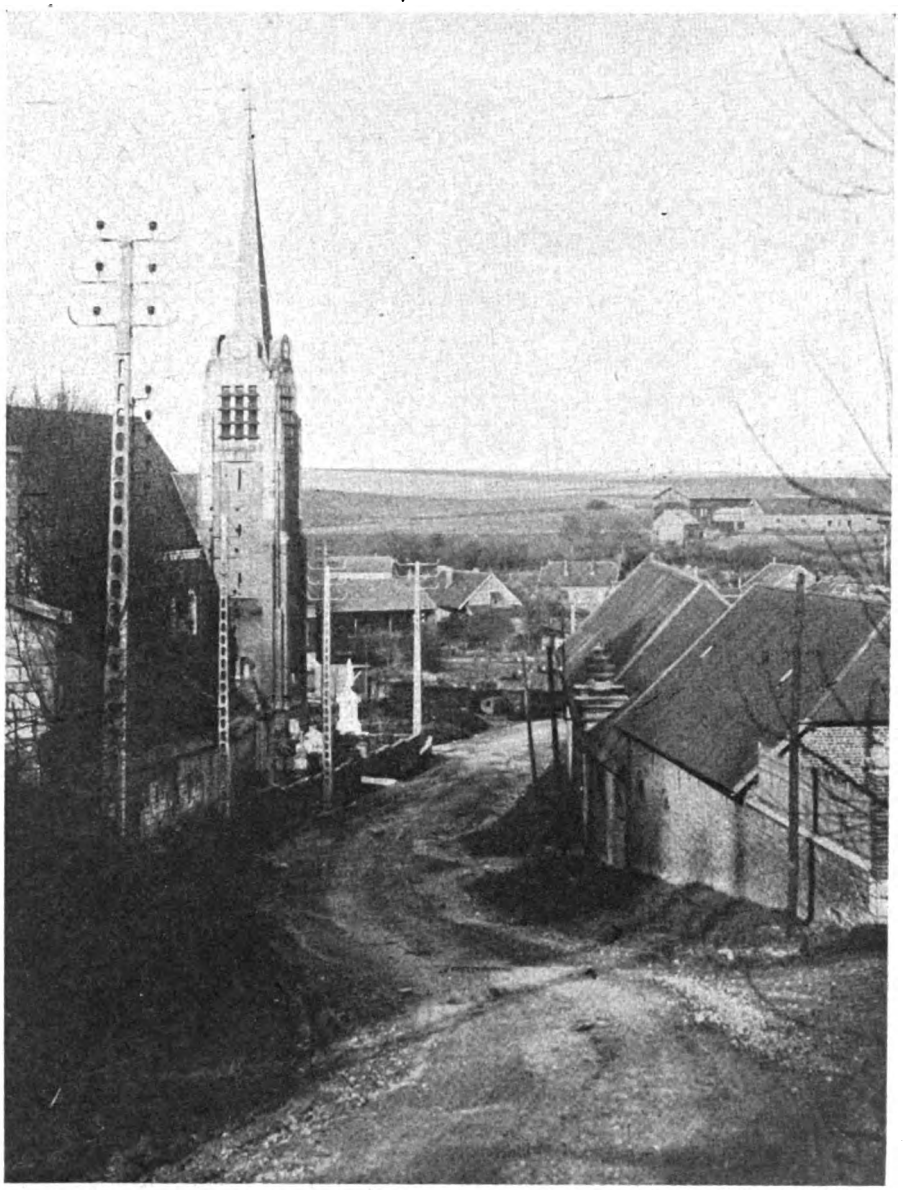

Photo: G. T. Watson.

DOWN A WINDING LANE

Templeux-la-Fosse was reached and passed, during the March Retreat, on the 22nd of the month. The VII Corps was holding a 7½-mile front slightly east of the village when the day broke, but a retirement had to be ordered to conform with that of the XIX Corps on the right. In the course of this, two battalions, the 9th K.O.Y.L.I. and the 1st East Yorks, were all but cut off, as they were still east of Templeux-la-Fosse when the Germans penetrated the village behind them. They escaped by making a difficult détour.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DEFENDING THE AISNE

Men of the Worcestershire Regiment holding the southern bank of the Aisne near Maizy, on May 27th, 1918. This river rises at a point in the Meuse Department some 50 miles south of Verdun, flows north-westward through the French Ardennes, then turns almost due west, crossing the Aisne Department 60 miles south of St. Quentin, until it enters the Oise 75 miles from Paris.

Balloons to the Fore

Enemy balloons towed by motors played a considerable part in the attack. They were reported as going up in the front line almost as soon as the first Germans crossed the trenches and, later, continued to follow the infantry closely. "With unwinking eyes" they would spot the exact line on which our troops had taken a stand and, by reporting it to the guns, would enable well-supported assaults to be quickly staged.

The enemy soon won the line of the Aisne and, making large captures of prisoners and guns, continued his advance southwards. Behind the river, the Allied troops tried to hold successive ridges, but were driven from position after position. The 25th Division, coming up from reserve, made gallant but unavailing efforts to stem the tide. A party of 120 men of the 2nd Devon, who had been retained in reserve, emulated their heroic comrades by making a daring and useful little counter-attack. But the retreat continued. From the high ground, the fields could be seen to be covered with hostile infantry and the roads with guns and transport. There were priceless targets for artillery but hardly a gun was available.

So great was the confusion that an artillery brigade commander, having remained behind until he had got as many of his guns away as possible, joined up in the dark with what he thought to be our retiring infantry, to be tapped on the back shortly afterwards and told that he was a prisoner.

On the left of the IX Corps, the French fell back faster and further than they or the British had done in any of the great battles. On the right they stood well, and 3 battalions coming up in support, worked in hearty co-operation with our 21st Division, which itself had been fighting stoutly.

Brigadier-General Grogan was the soul of our resistance. With a few officers and some 300 men drawn from 3 divisions, "hungry, sleepless, mostly wounded but of marvellous spirit," he collected stragglers, blocked the way and often restored the situation. "In a position of extreme personal and tactical danger, after three days of incessant fighting, he bumped joyously backwards and forwards along the line on a commandeered mount, his round face wreathed in smiles . . . in full view, laughing and talking with the men as he passed" [1]; but at the same time taking sound steps to deal with the situation.

The Onslaught Ends

On the 29th the leading elements of the 19th Division began to arrive. They got to work at once and put in some fine fighting, the 2nd Wiltshire doing particularly well both in attack and in defence. The Germans no longer had matters all their own way. They made, indeed, a considerable advance on the 30th, and actually pushed the French back to a point on the Marne within 60 miles of Paris. But, on the 31st,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ATTENDING BRITISH WOUNDED

A French nurse attends wounded Tommies at Maizy, again on May 27th, 1918. This village stands on the south bank of the Aisne 25 km. north-west of Reims and 29 km. due east of Soissons. May 27th was the opening date of the Third Battle of the Aisne, which lasted until June 7th.

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with the help of an American division, Pétain was able to hold and consolidate his line. The battle was practically over by the 2nd June. The enemy was, however, most anxious to seize the railways at Reims, without which he would find supply very difficult. He therefore made repeated attacks against the British on the Montagne de Bligny. He actually captured the hill on the 6th June, but the 1/4th Shropshire L.I., by a brilliant counter-attack, regained it; and that was the end.

The German onslaught, cleverly staged and admirably executed, proved so successful at the outset that its purpose was enlarged from mere diversion to decisive effort. In result, however, it was a failure, for it added a third deep and dangerous pocket to the two already existing. Like the other victorious offensives, it petered out partly because of difficulties of supply and partly because of hardening resistance due to the arrival of reserves. On this occasion, the stout protection afforded to Reims by two French and two British divisions on the right of the line was a principal factor in the German defeat. "The British," said General Maistre, "furnished the breakwater against which the hostile waves have beaten and shattered themselves." But the French deserved equal praise.

The first fruits of unity of command had proved disappointing. The struggle on the Somme had reached its close without much direction from Foch. The lateness of the intervention of French reserves at the battle of the Lys had seemed to entail unnecessary risk, and had caused some ill-feeling between G.H.Q. and the Higher Command. Then, on the Aisne, a serious situation had arisen which had evidently taken Foch completely by surprise, and against which he was for long unable to produce any effective counter-measures. His stock had fallen heavily. His earlier failures were recalled. If, in the next emergency, he were to show no advance on previous performance, he might well fall from high place, and the system of central control so ardently desired and so tardily attained might die with him. Fortunately for him and for the Allies the tide was about to turn.

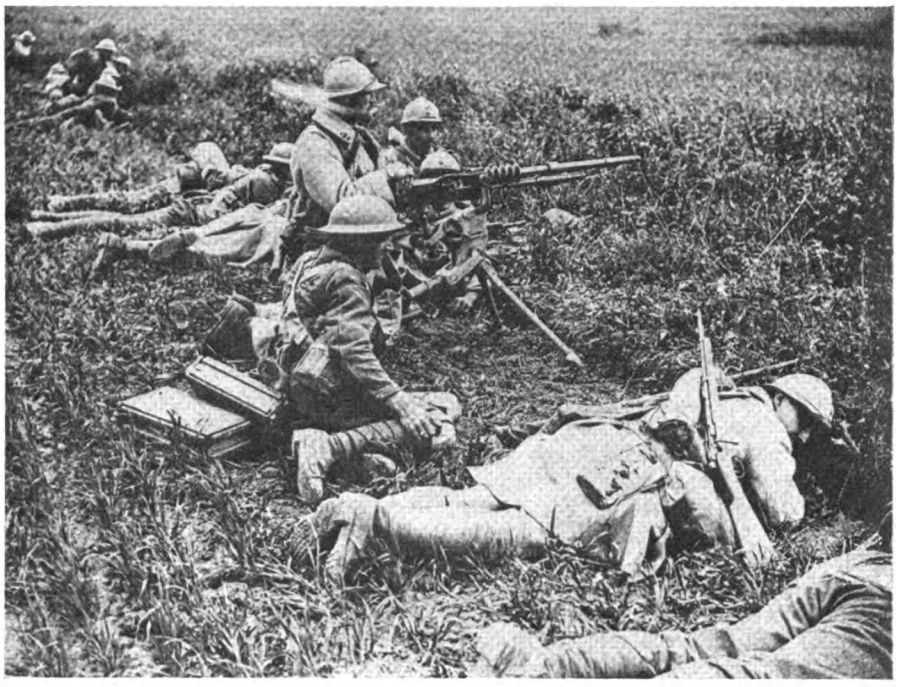

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AWAITING THE ENEMY

British and French soldiers together awaiting the enemy in the open, north of Courville, May 29th, 1918. On the 27th the Germans had succeeded in crossing the river on an 18-mile front between Vailly and Berry-au-Bac, two points about equidistant from Maizy on the west and east sides respectively. The chief event on the 29th was the German capture of Soissons.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSSING THE MARNE

The names in this chapter ring out like an echo of 1914, yet the British troops here seen are crossing the Marne at Dormans on May 29th, 1918. Dormans is a small town 34 km. south-west of Reims, and some distance from the line at this date. The enemy, however, reached it only two days later.

A Drawn Battle

On the 9th June the Germans, using two armies, launched an attack against Pétain with the object of breaking down the projection between the two pockets created by their offensives in March and April. They penetrated in places to a depth of 10 miles, but at such fearsome cost that, on the 11th, Ludendorff ordered a halt. It was a drawn battle, neither side regarding the result with complacence: for the assailants a definite check; for the defenders, further heavy losses, a further drop in the prestige of Foch.

Actually, the situation now favoured the Allies, though they were far from

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recognising the fact. The position of Germany at this time has indeed been aptly described as " brilliant but hopeless." In 3 months from the 15th March to the 15th June, she had won four great tactical successes, only to find herself strategically impoverished. During that period the balance of numbers had turned against her. The British Army was now stronger than on the 21st March, having received from England and from the Middle East reinforcements totalling half a million men. Moreover, the American Army containing " a seemingly inexhaustible flood of gleaming youth " [1] was coming into line. Lloyd George, prince of leaders in a crisis, was drawing from defeat redoubled energy. "The Tiger" (Clemenceau) was unshakable. In Italy the Austrians were held. Jerusalem and Baghdad were firmly in our hands. Lastly, the power of the German Army—that splendid and valorous military instrument—was waning. Losses, disappointment, blockade, and propaganda were slowly but surely sapping its strength. In its next onrush, the waves would dash fruitlessly against a rocky shore, and the ebb of the waters would begin.

The Battle of Reims was not indeed intended as a last bid. It was yet another diversion designed to attract the Allied reserves to the south; for Ludendorff still hoped to win final victory by crushing the British Army out of existence. After a quick, forceful stroke in Champagne, he planned to launch a grand offensive in Flanders on the 20th July.

Double Attack on Reims

On the 15th July, he attacked on either side of Reims with some 50 divisions, aiming at capturing the town by the usual pincer process. The assault east of the city failed for two reasons: the first that there was no surprise, Zero day and Zero hour having been revealed by prisoners; the second that the French had adopted the methods of defence which had been urged in vain upon Duchêne by the British divisional commanders in the previous battle. The assailants withered away under fire. The repulse was complete.

West of the town, a German army forced the passage of the Marne and advanced a few miles beyond it, fighting bitterly for every yard with French and American divisions.

In the meantime, Foch had collected 20 divisions with 350 tanks for a great counterstroke from west to east across the pocket. On the 18th—a fateful day in the War—he drove the enemy back about 3 miles on a front of 30 miles. Continuing the pressure later, he forced him out of the pocket with heavy losses in men and material.

Into this French offensive came four British divisions. Haig, although he knew that his front was shortly to be the target for a great assault, although Foch had just withdrawn eight French divisions from Flanders, and although the British Government had authorised him to refuse to move any of his reserves to the south if he deemed it dangerous to do so, sent eight divisions to Pétain, of which four were placed unreservedly at his disposal.

The 15th and 34th Divisions struck from the north-west of the pocket, the 51st and 62nd from its south-east corner. In certain respects, there was a considerable sameness in the experiences of the four divisions. Owing to an unfounded belief that the enemy was on the run, they were hurried into the line and asked to attack without being given the time necessary for reconnaissance and for arranging artillery support. The result was that, although they fought finely and gained a little ground, their losses were unnecessarily heavy.

They all found the French maps difficult to work with; for the latter were of small scale, indistinct and not very accurate, and compared unfavourably with the productions of the survey section of our General Staff, which were of large scale and a model of clearness and accuracy.

Fighting in Dense Forests

They much enjoyed being in beautiful, rolling, well-wooded country. Fighting in forests was, however, a new experience for them. They had to make very trying forced marches through them by night. They had to fight their way forward through dense undergrowth, running into ambushes, continually meeting hidden machine guns and finding great difficulty in keeping touch and direction.

With practice, and at a high price for the lessons learned, they eventually overcame these handicaps and drove their opponents out of a country eminently suited to defence.

They appreciated the privilege of fighting in concert with crack French divisions, and greatly admired the martial qualities of the latter. The *poilu*, in ancient uniform on leave in his village (the only view most of our troops had previously had of him) hardly does himself justice.

On the 20th July, the 62nd and 51st Divisions advanced in line, but, ill-supported by artillery, they made very little progress. The furthest advance was effected by 2nd-Lieut. P. Moore, of the 5th K.O.Y.L.I., with two platoons. He reconnoitred a wood and found the enemy in possession. His runner was shot. He returned to his men and, taking a party of ten, attacked the wood. " Five of his men were killed and four wounded and only one remained. The Germans then retired . . . . but Moore went after them, rushed the machine gun, killed the gunners and took two prisoners and the gun. With the latter he . . . captured two more Germans and another machine gun. The gun he turned on to the still-retreating enemy . . . then collecting all the troops he could find, he continued the advance . . . " [1] taking post and consolidating eventually in a forward position.

On the 21st, the divisions fared but little better. Artillery support had improved and the situation had become clearer, but the enemy was resisting stubbornly in ground difficult of approach. On the 23rd, our attack was greatly hampered by short shooting on the part of the French covering artillery, and it was not until the 27th that the divisions began really to get forward. On the 28th and 29th, moving happily in the right direction, they made considerable advances, the 8th West Yorkshire finishing up the joint contribution to the Allied counterstroke by the skilful and daring capture of an important hill.

Highlanders and Yorkshiremen

The association of the 51st and the 62nd—two particularly fine divisions—proved very effective. The Highlanders and the Yorkshiremen co-operated in the most cordial fashion. Between them they captured 1,300 prisoners, 140 machine guns and 40 guns, and they broke up four hostile divisions. From among the many units which performed valiantly, the 6th Black Watch was selected for the award of a *Citation* and a *Légion d'Honneur*. The Jocks saw to it on their departure that both the occasion and the country should be fully exploited. They entrained each with a tin of bully in one hand and a bottle of champagne in the other.

The 15th and 34th Divisions fought separately, French units being on either flank. The 15th took over from the 1st

[1] Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis* (Sandhurst Edition), p. 435.

[1] *History of the 62nd (West Riding) Division*, p. 185.

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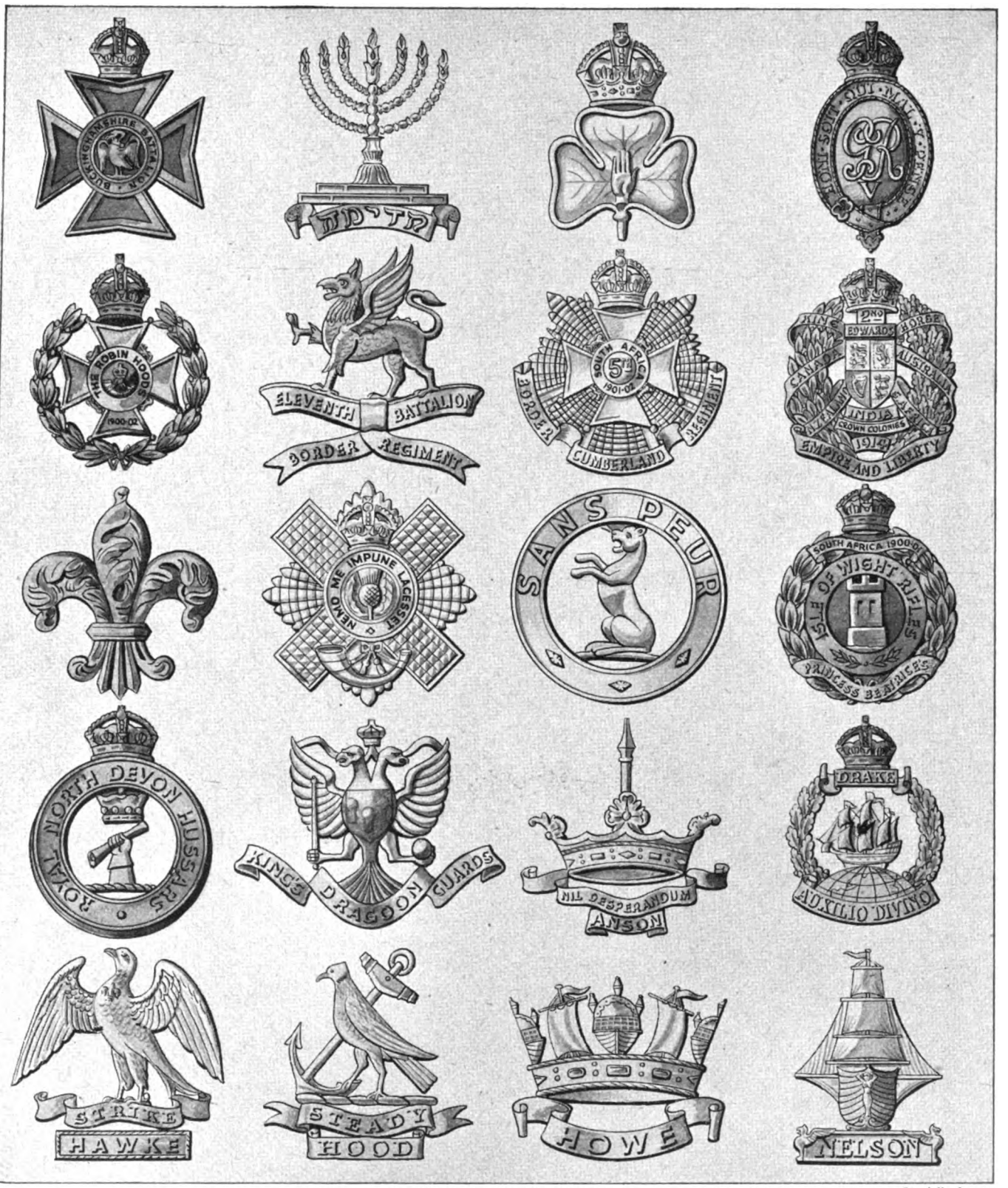

Specially drawn.

BADGES—TWELFTH SELECTION

Reading from left to right, the top row first, the badges are those of: 1—Buckinghamshire Batt., Ox. and Bucks. Light Infantry. 2—The Jewish Regt. (38th, 39th, 40th Royal Fusiliers). 3—Young Citizens' Batt. (14th Royal Irish Rifles). 4—Household Batt., Household Cavalry. 5—Robin Hood Batt. (7th Notts. and Derby Regt.). 6—Lonsdale Batt. (11th Border Regt.). 7—5th Batt. the Border Regt. 8—2nd King Edward's Horse. 9—The Manchester Regt. (Officer's badge). 10—Queen's Edinburgh Rifles (4th/5th Royal Scots). 11—Sutherland and Caithness Batt. (5th Seaforth Highlanders). 12—Isle of Wight Rifles (8th Hampshire Regt.). 13—Royal North Devon Hussars (worn in latter part of War). 14—1st (King's) Dragoon Guards (worn at beginning of War). 15—Anson Batt., 63rd (Royal Naval) Division. 16—Drake Batt., R.N. Div. 17—Hawke Batt., R.N. Div. 18—Hood Batt., R.N. Div. 19—Howe Batt., R.N. Div. 20—Nelson Batt., R.N. Div.

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American Division. The Americans had been heavily battered and their commander wrote of the relief that " It was an inspiration to us to see the able way in which your Division took hold of the situation and relieved us of our arduous burden." [1] On the 23rd, the division attacked. In spite of stubborn resistance and weakness of gun-support, it fought its way forward until, having out-distanced troops on either side, it was forced to halt and throw back defensive flanks.

On the 26th, J. A. Turner, commanding the 13th R. Scots—a born leader and a fine athlete, aged 27—was killed. Here is an extract from one of his last letters to his mother: " Pray that I may have more strength to carry on; more courage to face the very worst that comes; victory without giving my men unnecessary pain; that I may be spared to return to you. If that may not be, I have not lost my faith; my conscience is clear, and I am not afraid to ' go over the top ' to meet my Maker, ' for everlasting peace.' " [1]

On the 27th, the division attacked again. Seaforths, Black Watch and Gordons won their objective—Buzancy and the ground round it; but, as the division on the right failed to protect that flank, they had to withdraw. Another assault on the 1st August was quickly brought to a standstill. By that time, the strength of most of the battalions was down to 250. Fortunately, however, this continual pressure was having its effect; and, on the 2nd, before the division was relieved, it had the joy of driving the enemy back 2½ miles across open country.

[1] *The Fifteenth (Scottish) Division* (Stewart and Buchan).

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

Exploits of the 34th Division

The 34th Division joined in the fight on the 23rd. The 102nd Brigade made a fine advance of 1,200 yards and dug in. But it was unsupported. On the 29th, a properly organised attack met with considerable success until a counter-attack drove back the division on the left and caused the whole line to fall back. On the 1st August, supported by one gun to every 15 yards, the division won all its objectives and captured many prisoners. It had by that time, however, suffered losses amounting to nearly 4,000 men, and had therefore to be relieved.

The British divisions were proud of their association with this great counter-stroke—the turning point of the war. They had been given places of honour in the line, and nobly had they justified that distinction. Decorations descended

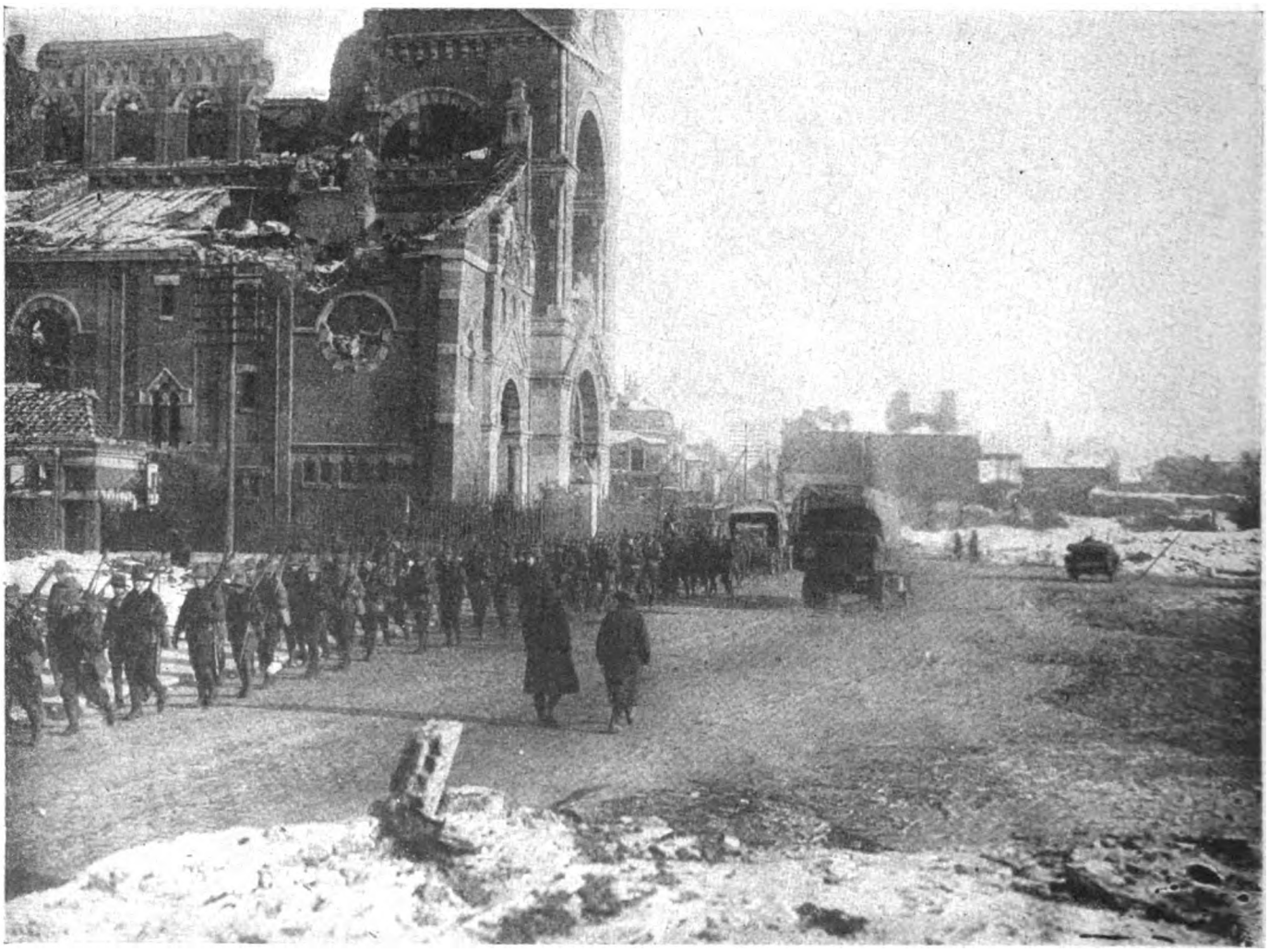

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PASSING ALBERT CATHEDRAL

Photographs, past and present, of the universally-known " Hanging Virgin " of Albert Cathedral were published as far back as on pages 140 and 141 of this work; and the spectacle furnished by the horizontal statue must already have been familiar, from pictures, even to those who never set eyes on the reality. What is probably less familiar is the lower part of the same fane; and here we show Australian troops passing the west door of the building on December 9th, 1917.

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on them like manna from heaven and Orders of the Day praised their conduct, their courage, their tenacity in glowing terms. Nothing could have exceeded the kindness and consideration with which they were treated by the French, and close comradeships were formed in this battle which were renewed after the war. A noble tribute was paid by one of the finest of the French divisions, in the shape of a monument at Buzancy, inscribed :

" Here the noble Thistle of Scotland will flourish for ever among the Roses of France.

17th (French) Division
to
15th (Scottish) Division."

In the meantime, the remainder of the Army was enjoying a peaceful summer. The weather was fine and warm and, accordingly, bathing, where facilities existed, was the order of the day. East of Amiens, the Australians, having captured " Villers Bret," had no intention of parting with their prize. It contained three valuable commodities : cellars stored with good red wine, ladies' underclothing and fly-papers. As to the first, the " digger " was often to be seen, a two-gallon petrol tin in each hand, climbing up to the town on self-imposed " water " duty. The second provided light raiment in which to loll about (or even perform duties) on sunny days ; and the third were invaluable against the pest of flies which were peculiarly virulent that year.

Praise for the Australians

In this area the Australians, by a series of small operations, gradually drove the enemy from all the ground overlooking Amiens, and established themselves far on the plateau in positions suitable as a jumping-off line for a major offensive. The victory of the 8th August, said General Montgomery, " could not have been won without the steady and continuous offensive of the Australian Corps throughout the months of April, May, June and July." [1]

On the 4th July, the German positions near Hamel immediately south of the Somme were stormed, 1,500 prisoners being captured at a cost of less than 1,100 casualties. This little battle was important for two reasons : the first, that the tanks combined excellently with the Australians, having carefully practised with them beforehand, and won their complete confidence ; the second, that the German revealed by his lessened resistance and the general

[1] *The Story of the Fourth Army*, p. 1.

Photo : Keystone.

ALBERT CATHEDRAL : THE WEST DOOR

The Germans took Albert in March, 1918, but only just : which is to say that our line was never further away than the immediate western outskirts. V Corps troops were driven back on the town on March 25th. On the 26th, faced with the choice of holding the high ground at the eastern end of Albert, or the heights west of it on the right bank of the Ancre, the authorities adopted the latter course, and the ruins were abandoned to the enemy, who entered about 4.30 p.m. The German troops concerned had had no rations for 48 hours, and fell ravenously on our abandoned supplies.

slovenliness of his trench and battery organisation, that his morale was definitely failing. For those who took part in the fighting, the possibility of a victorious end to the War in 1918 loomed up for the first time.

Foch now suggested a British offensive in the north ; but Haig objected. He preferred to free Amiens and its railway by a joint British and French attack east of that town. Foch fell into line, and the plan was settled. Rawlinson was to advance with one corps—the III—north of the Somme and two corps—the Australian and Canadian—south of that river. On his right, the French 1st Army under Debeney was to strike 40 minutes later. To Haig was given the personal direction of the two armies.

Haig and Rawlinson between them effected the greatest surprise of the War, except perhaps that at Megiddo, and they succeeded in doing so at a time when the preparations essential to the delivery of a major offensive had

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reached gigantic proportions and when, moreover, instruments and methods for discovering them had been perfected by four years of warfare.

"Keep Your Mouth Shut"

The strength of the Fourth Army was doubled both in men and guns. Behind the lines, hospitals, aerodromes, supply and ammunition dumps, and all the numberless other necessary services, were created without causing the Germans any suspicion. This triumph of secrecy was due to careful organisation and to countless precautions. Of the latter, a few only can be mentioned: movement by night, the use of camouflage—now at a high pitch of perfection—the maintenance of local air-superiority and the issue to all troops of the pamphlet known as "KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT," of which the vital sentence was: "The success of the operations and the lives of your comrades depends upon your silence"—a silence that was well kept. Even quite senior officers were not allowed to know of the impending offensive until such knowledge was essential for the execution of the particular tasks they had to perform.

The Germans were certainly not very watchful. With their daily routine gun-fire, they blew up a number of the small ammunition dumps which were widely scattered in our forward area, and they set on fire 25 of our tanks in a wood close to our front line. But, even so, their suspicions were not aroused.

One great difficulty was to drown the noise of the 450 tanks moving to their positions of assembly. This was overcome by the drone of aircraft which flew over the area, not only on the nights of movement but also, in order to lull suspicion, for some nights previously.

The anxiety of the commanders on the last night must have been intense. Not only were the tanks on the march, but every road towards the front was packed with troops and transport. Had the enemy's suspicions been aroused, and had he bombed or shelled the roads, he would have caused devastating losses.

That he did not do so, and that all arrangements worked as to the ticking of a clock, stands to the everlasting credit of Headquarters, Fourth Army. Normally, when a mistake in staff work ruins or hampers an operation, the staff concerned is subjected to severe condemnation. On the other hand, when a great enterprise is brought to fulfilment without a hitch, there is a tendency to take perfection for granted and to say no more about it. This is a faulty attitude. The staff-work of Armies, corps, divisions and brigades leading up to the 8th August was deserving of the highest praise and should receive it.

Bouquets All Round

The co-ordination of the vast bodies handled, the close timings, the march-discipline, the construction of new roads, the lay-out of the starting lines, the issue of 300,000 maps and nearly 50,000 photographs, the supply of ammunition, food, and water, the unobtrusive registration of 2,000 guns, the secret collection of nearly 600 tanks—all these duties and a hundred others effectively and punctually performed, reflect credit alike on commanders, on staffs, on map-makers, on airmen and on that great body of tireless workers in other branches behind the line who do not fight indeed with bomb and bullet, but whose creative efforts lay the foundations of victory.

The Fourth Army, as assembled for battle on the 8th August, consisted of the Canadian Corps (4 divs.), the Australian Corps (5 divs.), the III Corps (3 divs.), the Cavalry Corps (3 Cav. divs.), 17 squadrons R.A.F. and 12 battalions of tanks, two of which consisted of light whippets. In reserve, close to the front under Haig's personal control, were 3 divisions—the 17th, 32nd and 63rd. It was calculated that the opposition on the front under assault consisted of 6 German divisions with 8 more within 8 days' call. These divisions were all below strength, and their morale had been adversely affected by the aggressiveness of the Australians and by the success of the French counterstroke in the south.

The attack of the III Corps was subsidiary and was intended to protect the left flank of the main attack, which was to be made by the Australians and Canadians supported by the bulk of the tanks and by the Cavalry Corps.

The furthest objective for the day lay about 6 miles ahead. Its capture in one bound would have entailed a long journey for the overburdened foot-soldier, and a good deal of leap-frogging had therefore to be arranged. The cavalry was to push through as opportunity might occur, and would seize and hold the far objective until the arrival of the infantry. Later, it would move south-east to cut the German communications opposite Debeney's front.

At 4.20 a.m., on the 8th August, the battle began. Without a note of warning, 2,000 guns spoke with a single voice, pouring forth flames of fire and cataracts of steel. Under that support, the infantry and tanks advanced confident of victory. There was hardly a response; for the sound-rangers, the flash-spotters and the airmen had fixed each gun-position so accurately that the German batteries were subjected from the outset to a hurricane of fire

Less Effective Co-operation

South of the Somme the surprise was complete, and the two corps won their first objectives by 6.20 a.m. Then there was a pause of two hours, during which the guns moved up in support; and afterwards the advance continued. The cavalry was unleashed and, for the first time on the Western Front, broke through the hostile line. The infantry began to reach the final objective at 10.30 a.m. North of the Somme, the hostile resistance was more stubborn, and the co-operation of our tanks and infantry less effective. Consequently, progress was relatively slow.

At the time of the attack a thick mist prevailed and it did not clear until 10 a.m. Although it interfered somewhat with intercommunication and with the co-operation of tanks with infantry, on balance, it strongly favoured the assailants.

The Canadian Corps, which, in the interests of secrecy, only took over their line from the Australians on the night of the 7th/8th August, advanced on a front of 3 divisions. On the right, the 3rd Division had a particularly formidable task to perform. Its 9th Brigade had to deploy from the small bridgehead which we held over the Luce and then advance up the slopes of a high open plateau. This task was skilfully performed by the 43rd Battalion. In the Luce valley, the 8th Brigade captured Hangard. That it had an easy success was largely due to Corporal Miner. This gallant N.C.O., who had been wounded in the initial advance and had refused to withdraw, rushed a machine-gun post single-handed and turned the captured gun on to the enemy. Later, with two of his men, he took another machine gun. Finally, again single-handed, he charged a bombing post of 12 men, bayoneted two and put the remainder to flight. In this last act, he was mortally wounded.

As soon as the 3rd Division had captured the first objective the 4th Division passed through it to the attack of the final objective.

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EAST OF VIMY

Then and Now

Photo: Imperial War Museum

OPPY UNDER SHELL FIRE

A photograph of the village under bombardment during May, 1917. Oppy and Oppy Wood were places known by name, if not by contact, to almost every British Tommy who saw service on the Western Front. The village is situated 10 km. north-east of Arras, and 9 km. south-east of Lens. It does not stand on a main road, but on a by-road leading from Arleux-en-Gohelle to Gavrelle, while other lanes connect it with Fresnoy and Neuvireuil.

Photo: G. T. Watson

OPPY ACROSS A CARPET OF FLOWERS

Oppy was first mentioned in Haig's despatches under the date June, 1917, in a description of " Minor Operations Continued Preparatory to the Third Battle of Ypres." The idea underlying these operations was that of giving the enemy the impression of a heavy attack launched against him on a 12-mile front between Gavrelle and Hulluch. Elaborate gas and smoke demonstrations, and a mock raid, were made, accompanied by several real assaults, one of which was staged by troops of the 31st and 5th Divisions opposite Oppy.

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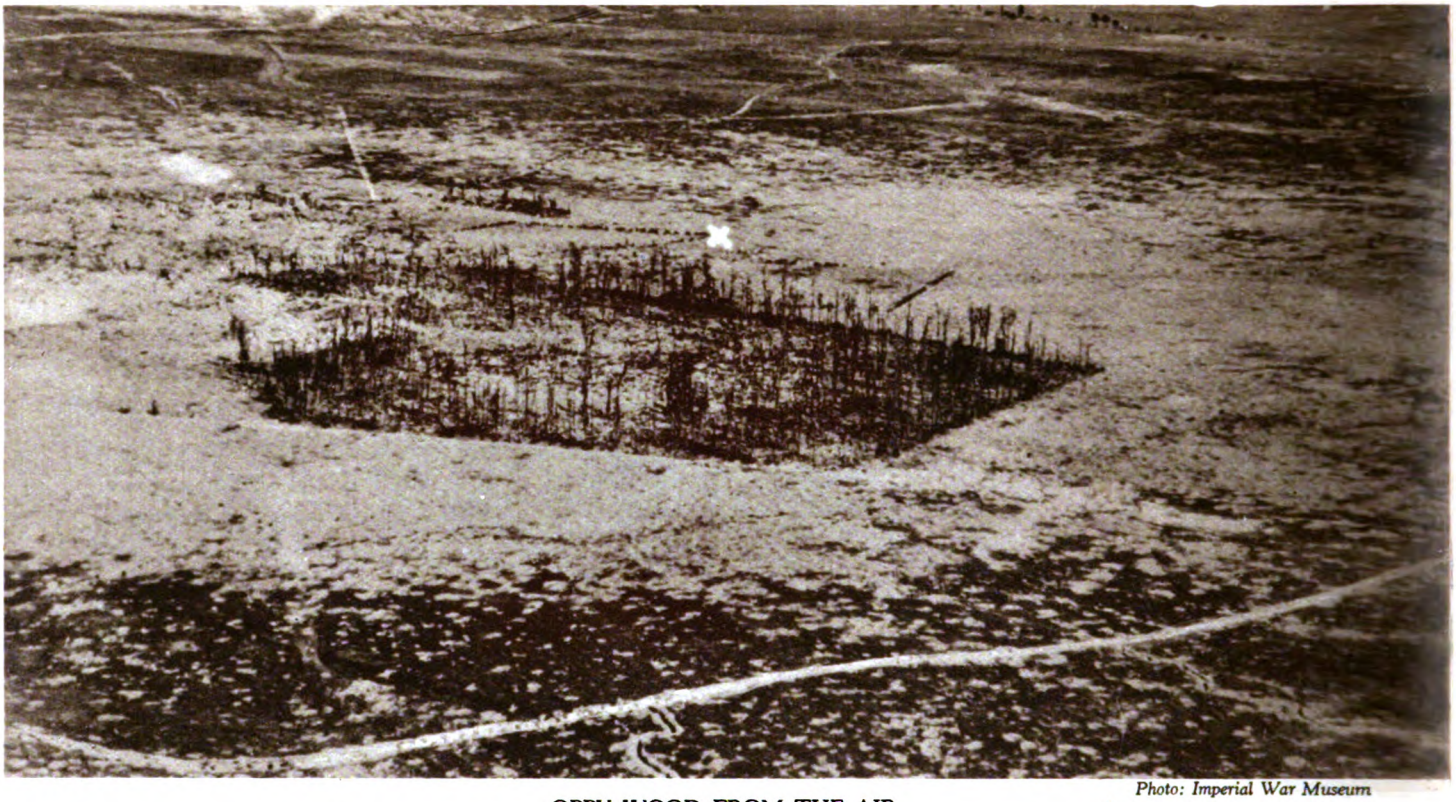

Photo: Imperial War Museum

OPPY WOOD FROM THE AIR

The little rectangular wood lies on the west side of the village, with which it shared notoriety as a scene of fierce fighting. By the time of the Arras battle of March 28th, 1918, Oppy was still in German hands, but the front line ran along its very outskirts. In the course of the attack the 168th Brigade of the 56th (London) Division was driven back about a mile, after holding its own gallantly from the start of operations until after 10 a.m.

Photo: G. T. Watson

THE MARKS OF WAR NOT YET EFFACED

This is an interesting photograph, for the road shown runs exactly on the line of the trench visible in the foreground of the War picture. Modern Oppy Wood, like many another, consists as yet of only a very sparse covering of young and struggling trees. The land about it is intensely cultivated, yet shot-pierced relics, such as the piece of "elephant-iron" above, are plentiful near wood and village. Oppy was recaptured by the 8th Division on October 7th, 1918.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

DROCOURT—OF SWITCH FAME

The celebrated Drocourt—Quéant switch-line actually ran past Drocourt (7½ km. east-south-east of Lens, 8 km. east-north-east of Vimy) to the north of Hénin-Liétard. It was first observed by the R.F.C. in October, 1916, but at that date was far from complete—the enemy, indeed, still being feverishly engaged on it some while after our opening attack in the Battle of Arras had been launched on April 9th, 1917. This photograph of Drocourt was taken in October, 1918.

Photo: G. T. Watson

DROCOURT: MAIN STREET AND WAR MEMORIAL

The storming of the switch-line on September 2nd, 1918, by the Canadian Corps, has been many times alluded to in the course of this work. Drocourt itself was penetrated on the 3rd, but the northernmost stretch of the switch was not crossed until October 11th. To-day there is little of interest, and even less of beauty, in the reconstructed village, which does not possess a British cemetery. To judge from the spectators, left and right, our photographer caused a thrill.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

A FEARFUL HAVOC

This untidy-looking upheaval, through which caterpillar-tractors are seen hauling guns, represents the village of Fresnes-les-Montauban on October 15th, 1918. The place stands on the Arras–Douai route, between Gavrelle and Vitry-en-Artois. A subsidiary road crosses the main one, connecting Fresnes with Neuvireuil in the north, and Plouvain and Biache-St. Vaast in the south. All these names, however, are those of places behind the German Line until late in 1918, and are little familiar to most ex-service men.

Photo: G. T. Watson

MODERN FRESNES: A RUSTIC SCENE

Probably better known than Fresnes-les-Montauban itself are some of the small woods near it—Gloster Wood on the east, Square Wood, Hollow Copse, and Railway Copse on the west. In the final Allied advance, the southern part of the Rouvray–Fresnes Line was broken by the 8th Corps on October 7th (1918), and Fresnes was captured on the 8th. This was one more step in the clearing of the way to Douai, and ultimately to Valenciennes.

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The German Machine-gunner Again

In the centre and left of the corps respectively, the 1st and 2nd Divisions, faced with less difficult ground, fought their way successfully to the final objective. The principal opposition came—as usual—from machine guns, which held out bravely. A post containing 3 of these had been delaying the advance for some time, when Corporal Good, of the 13th Battalion, dashed forward alone and killed or captured the whole of the garrison. Encountering a battery of 5·9-inch Howitzers shortly afterwards, he charged it with 3 of his men in the face of point-blank fire and swept both guns and detachments into his bag. His conduct was emulated by Private Croak of the same battalion, who captured one post single-handed and then, though severely wounded, led a successful attack against another, being mortally wounded in the act. On such deeds and on the conduct of the whole corps, the Canadians might justly pride themselves. They had won all their objectives, except for the village of Le Quesnel on their right, and they had captured 5,000 prisoners and 161 guns.

General Monash, who had taken over the command of the Australian Corps from General Birdwood, attacked with two divisions—the 2nd and 3rd—in line. The troops, accompanied by tanks and moving with great dash, swept all before them and, by 6.20 a.m., were on their first objective. A strong point containing 50 men and 4 machine guns held up the advance at one point, but Lieut. Gaby of the 28th Battalion, having found a gap in the wire, dashed in and, emptying his revolver on the gun-crews, captured the post. He was unfortunately killed 3 days later when gallantly leading his company.

During the morning, the 17th Armoured Car Battalion, pushing through the infantry, dashed along the Amiens-Brie road and attacked troops and transport 8 miles east of the starting line. Then the cars turned north and south, thoroughly disorganised the enemy's rear services, shot up a corps headquarters and continued to patrol the hostile area until dusk. This was a very remarkable and dashing performance.

The 4th and 5th Divisions passed through the 2nd and 3rd at 8 20 a.m., and, continuing the advance, began to reach the final objective at 10.30 a.m. The left of the 4th Division, however, was greatly retarded by fire from the north of the Somme, where the III Corps had not advanced as far as intended, and was forced to throw back a flank facing north. Elsewhere, the objective was fully occupied by noon.

Australians' Fine Success

Thus the Australian Corps, in the course of the day, won practically all its objectives; and it captured nearly 8,000 prisoners and 173 guns. The troops thoroughly deserved their success, not only on account of their brave and skilful fighting on the day of battle, but also for the consistent pressure they had exercised against the enemy in the previous three months.

The cavalry divisions, with their accompanying whippets, passed through the infantry between the second and third objective and, riding daringly forward, added greatly to the demoralisation of the enemy. Among their many achievements that day was the capture, by the 5th Dragoon Guards, of a train containing 600 reinforcements and a battery of guns. They were unable, however, to advance more than 2 miles beyond the final objective owing to fire of machine guns brought up by hostile reinforcements. At nightfall they were withdrawn.

The III Corps was expected to protect the left flank of the Australian Corps. It had, however, to cross deep and difficult ravines running down to the Somme, obstacles which interfered greatly with the co-operation of tanks with infantry. The Germans, too, in this area were expecting an attack in return for a big and successful raid which they had recently carried out against the 58th Division. The attack, therefore, did not come as a surprise and, consequently, met with a more stubborn resistance here than elsewhere. The Corps captured 2,400 prisoners and 40 guns, but its performance fell short of expectations.

On Rawlinson's right, the French made fair progress and took 3,000 prisoners.

The losses in the Canadian and Australian Corps had been exceptionally light. On their front, prisoners from 11 divisions had been captured, and it was believed that the German reserves in the immediate neighbourhood had all been absorbed into the fight. Prospects of further success on the morrow were therefore high.

The tanks rendered gallant and most effective service. They were employed on sound lines, that is, in large numbers and after careful practice in co-operation with infantry. They suffered heavy losses both on this and on the succeeding days of battle. But, more than any other factor, they proved decisive of the issue. It was "General Tank," as the Germans said in after-days, who won the War.

The Indefatigable R.A.F.

The artillery, both by their barrages and their counter-battery work, played an important part in the victory. The field batteries moved forward early in close support. The heavy batteries were in action at 9.30 a.m. well to the east of Villers-Bretonneux and at noon in the Warfusée valley. The whole army was, in fact, imbued with the spirit of the offensive.

The R.A.F. was as indefatigable as ever in rendering support. One instance of the pluck and endurance of its pilots may be cited here.

Captain Ferdinand West had a bad accident in the fog on August 8th. In spite of this, he went out on tank contact-patrol on August 9th. On this occasion, he scattered enemy infantry which had surrounded four of our tanks. In the process, his machine was so riddled with bullets that he only just managed to bring it down safely. On August 10th, he was firing at hostile troops in Roye when he was attacked by 7 aircraft. One of his legs was at once severed by an explosive bullet, and fell into the controls. He lifted it, and, though wounded also in the other leg, manœuvred his machine so that his observer was able to fire several good bursts into enemy machines and drive them off. Finally, by pure grit, he managed to retain consciousness until he had landed his machine safely.

The triumphant success achieved by Rawlinson heartened the British Army greatly. For its effect on the enemy we may turn to Ludendorff's account. "August 8th was the black day of the German army. . . . The divisions in line allowed themselves to be completely overwhelmed. . . . Six or seven had been completely battered. . . . August 8th marked the decline of our fighting power . . . . the war would have to be ended."

On the other hand, although the British Command deserved and won a splendid success, it allowed itself to be surprised by the extent of its victory. The general reserve was too small, consisting only of 3 divisions; and not one of those divisions was put in to carry on the attack at the crucial moment when the enemy was really on the run. The situation was such that, quite early in the battle, embussed infantry could have been taken by road to the final objective and carried on the attack

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRITISH AND GERMANS

Stretcher-cases, and German prisoners about to carry them back to the dressing-station: a photograph taken on August 8th, 1918, at Sailly-le-Sec. This, "the black day of the German Army," was the opening date of the second Allied assault (known as the Battle of Amiens) in what was to prove the final offensive of the War. It is therefore somewhat ironical that Sailly-le-Sec should have been, only a few months earlier, the nearest point to Amiens reached by the enemy north of the Somme.

from there. Infantry and tanks could have gone on without a check; and the only sign of artillery activity was the dropping of an occasional pip-squeak on one of the roads. Behind the reinforcing infantry and tanks cavalry could then have found their true rôle—the pursuit of a routed enemy.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

There is more than a hint of Germany's final overthrow in this long column of prisoners, passing another group equally large, on August 9th, 1918. Already, on the second day of the Battle of Amiens, captures by the Allies amounted to 24,000 men and 200 guns. The marchers, with mounted escort, are on their way to a "cage."

Neglected Opportunity

Our experiences in March and April had taught us the method by which a punch could be driven home for 40 miles. We had also seen the dangers of such a punch, and might well, in the intervening months, have studied ways of eliminating them. We possessed fine pursuing weapons in tanks and whippets. Hamel had warned us of the drop in German morale. Yet we neglected the opportunity. It did not come again. The Germans rushed up 18 divisions instead of the expected 8 and temporarily stayed our advance. Thus they gained the necessary time for that mining of the roads which delayed our progress so greatly, denied to us the hope of winning the War by a decisive stroke, and enabled them to claim for ever afterwards that they had never been defeated in battle.

The outstanding lessons of this great battle were—the one, the value of surprise; the other, the importance of being prepared for success.

The enemy summoned aircraft from the whole of his front to check the advance. Consequently, the British troops on the night of the 8th/9th August, experienced what was perhaps their worst dose of bombing in the war.

The fighting on the 9th was somewhat disjointed. At 4.20 a.m., the 75th Canadian Battalion, gallantly led by its commander, captured Le Quesnel and, with it, great nests of machine guns. Elsewhere, the battle was not in full swing until 1 p.m. The Canadians advanced about 3 miles, and the Australians, against stout opposition, won Framerville and the western slopes of Lihons Hill. The III Corps, assisted by an American division which moved with tremendous dash, took most of its objectives. In this action, Sergeant Harris, of the R. West Kents, led a successful attack against one machine-gun post and captured two others single-handed, being killed just as he completed his task.

On August 10th, the 32nd Division from the general reserve came into line south of the Somme, the Canadians advanced a further 2 miles against strenuous resistance, and the Australians continued their fierce struggle for Lihons.

On a Line of 1914

By the 11th, the enemy had been strongly reinforced, and not only prevented any progress from being made but, by repeated counter-attacks, tried to recover ground. He had now occupied an old and strong line of his dating

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from 1914 and running through the devastated battlefields of the Somme, from which, as he had destroyed great numbers of our tanks, it was difficult to expel him.

Foch wished the frontal attack to be continued. Haig, however, demurred. He had had bitter experience, as at Arras, of battles brilliantly begun and ending, when the enemy had recovered from his surprise and had sent up reinforcements, in fruitless blood-baths. Having attracted hostile reserves to the Somme, he proposed to hold his gains there and to strike unexpectedly elsewhere.

Foch reluctantly concurred, and the weight of the British effort was accordingly transferred north to the Third Army. Rawlinson was, however, to retain the enemy's attention by continuing his pressure. Tough fighting therefore continued on his front, in the course of which Sergeant Spall and Private Dinesen of the Canadians, and Sergeant Statton of the Australians, won well-deserved V.C's.

Between 8th and 21st August, the Fourth Army captured 23,000 prisoners and 400 guns and broke up most of the 27 divisions with which it had been engaged during that period; and all at the relatively small cost to itself of 27,000 casualties.

Since the 11th August, Haig had been secretly transferring his reserves to the north in preparation for fresh blows. On the 21st, he struck with 8 divisions of the Third Army in a south-easterly direction between Albert and Arras. Both sides, as befitted old soldiers, proceeded warily. The British assault was successful, but against a thin line only. The bulk of the Germans, 3 miles in rear, were untouched and, on the 22nd, struck heavily back. Byng, however, had also taken care to engage only a part of his forces. He moved up the remainder, repulsed the enemy and continued his advance.

A Feat Without Parallel

On the 22nd and 23rd, the Fourth Army captured Albert and made advances north and south of the Somme against considerable resistance. In this fighting, Lieut. W. Joynt, of the 8th Australian Battalion, performed a feat perhaps unparalleled for combined initiative and daring. While leading a company of a supporting battalion, he realised that the battalion in front had lost all its officers and had become disorganised. He dashed forward, rallied the men, got them into dead ground and linked them up with his own men.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

KEEPING IT WARM

Men of the 13th Canadian Battalion seated on a German gun which they had captured. This picture was taken on August 10th, by which date the progress made in three days of fighting had amounted to more than 12 miles along the Amiens—Roye road. The chief event of the day was the recapture, by the French, of Montdidier. Apart from the taking of Hallu, on the Roye—Chaulnes railway, there were no other important happenings on any front, European or Asiatic.

Having then made a personal reconnaissance and ascertained whence the bulk of the hostile fire holding up the advance was coming, he led the broken battalion across the open in a bayonet attack which proved completely successful.

In Byng's battle, there were some stirring incidents. Six sections of the 14th Welsh under Lieut. Williams swam

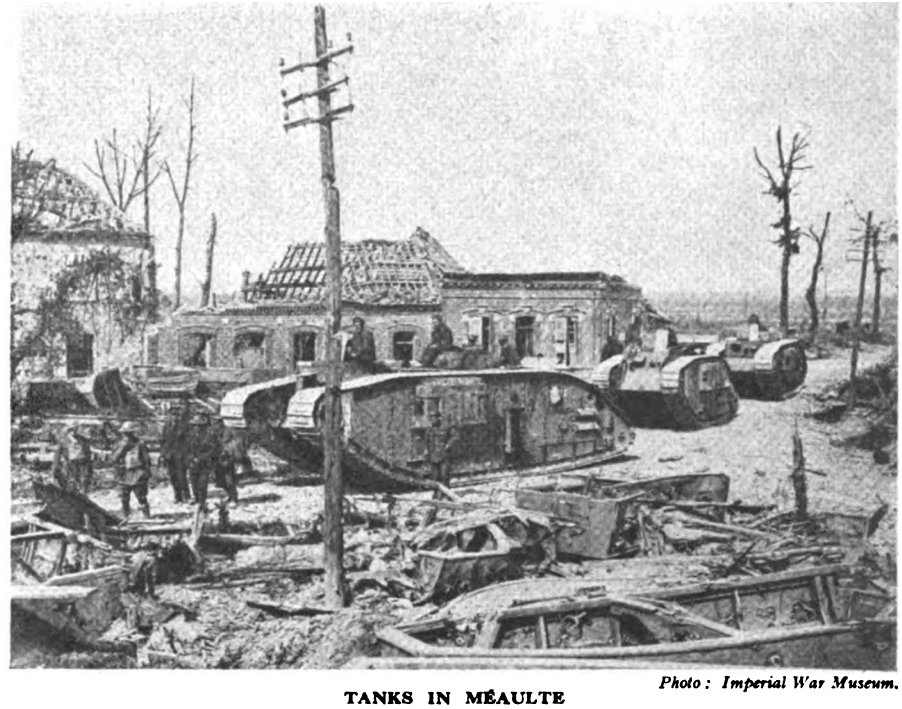

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TANKS IN MÉAULTE

Mark V tanks of the 4th Tank Battalion arriving in Méaulte soon after its capture on August 22nd, 1918, by the 5th Royal Berkshires, 12th Division. This was the second day of the Battle of Bapaume, in which the Third Army and 280 tanks were the main protagonists. A German counter-attack marked this date.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PURSUING THEIR VOCATION

Captured German doctors dressing the hurts of British wounded at an advanced dressing-station of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division at Grévillers, August 25th, 1918. By this date the prisoners taken in the Bapaume battle amounted to 17,000, and on the 25th itself the whole of the Albert—Bapaume road was cleared of the enemy.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SPOILS OF THE FOURTH ARMY

A dump of German guns acquired by the Fourth Army on and prior to August 27th, 1918. Many of the weapons bear, chalked on the barrel, the name of the unit responsible for their capture. The foremost in the picture bears that of a Canadian formation, the second that of the Anzac Corps, and so on. Notice also the "tanks" reference.

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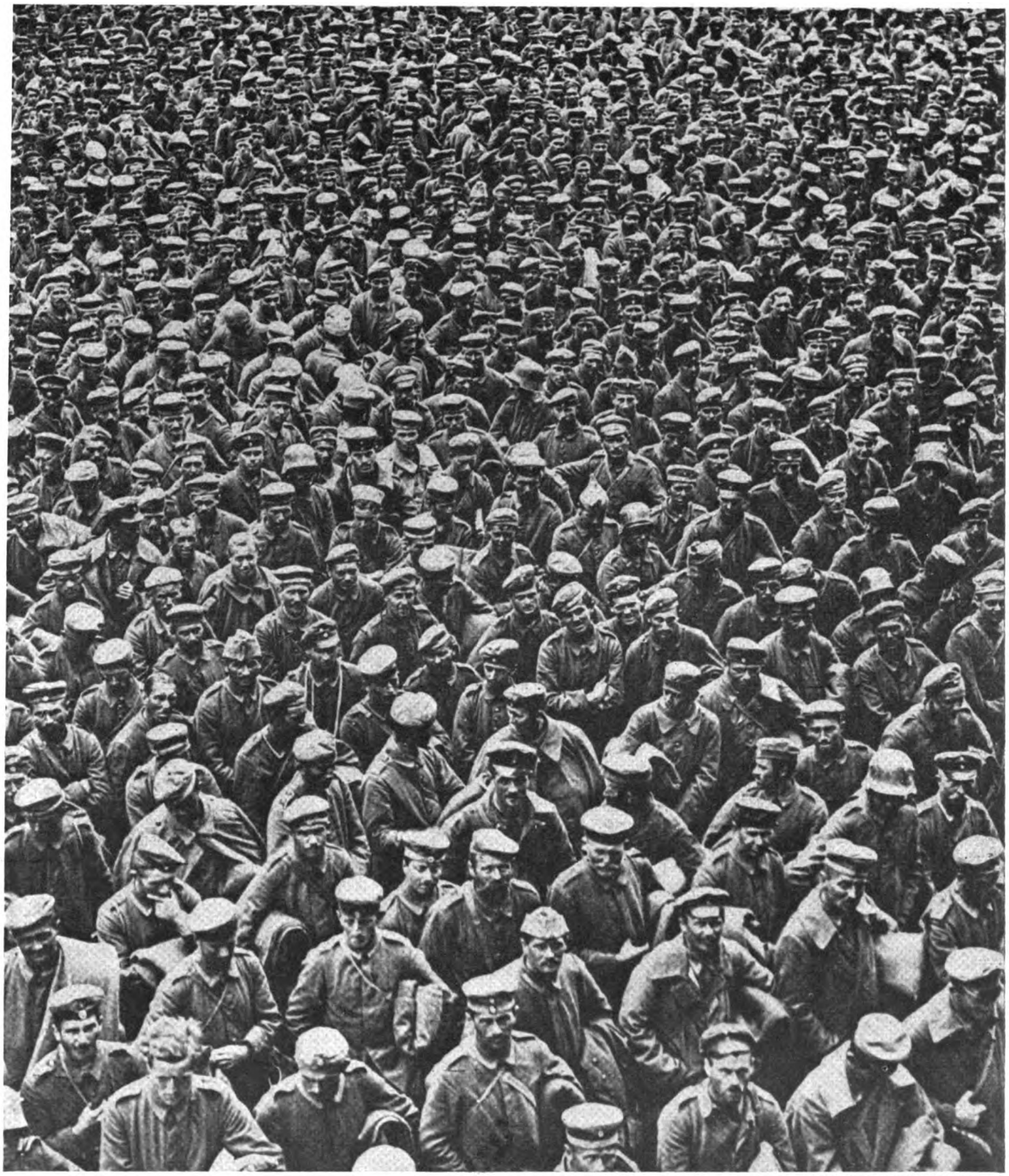

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HELD CAPTIVE

A small section only of the vast throng of German prisoners congregated together at a clearing dépot outside Abbeville on August 27th, 1918. All these men were taken by the Fourth Army during the Battle of Amiens. Hardly had they been sorted out, when the Bapaume battle furnished a fresh host; and so it continued, the numbers ever increasing, until the end of the struggle. The many types and expressions to be seen here are well worth the trouble of a close scrutiny.

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across the flooded Ancre and held a post on the far bank against repeated attacks for 36 hours. A little later, a small party of the 15th Welsh performed a similar feat lower down the river, the combined effect being greatly to facilitate the passage of other troops.

In the 5th Lancashire Fusiliers, Sergeant E. Smith captured three machine-gun posts (one single-handed) and a strong point. He then threw out a party of Germans which had penetrated the line.

The troops were fighting for long hours, the weather was hot and the going bad; yet spirits rendered buoyant by victory triumphed over exhaustion. The artillery was affording the closest support. The infantry of the 42nd Division being held up, a race ensued between two brigades—the 210th and 211th—coming up to help, "the batteries trotting and even galloping to the position. It was a perfect example of artillery manœuvre. At one moment an empty grass plain; a moment later, a plain covered with the guns, wagons and horses of the batteries. The instant the trails were dropped, before the horses had got clear of the position, the S.O.S. went up and 48 guns were belching fire practically simultaneously." [1]

[1] Gibbon, *The 42nd Division*, p. 161.

On the 24th, the Third and Fourth Armies advanced on a front of 33 miles. On the 26th, the First Army joined in and increased the front to 40 miles—the longest unbroken line seen in any offensive in the west.

The Resistance Stiffens

For five days, Byng's and Rawlinson's men struggled through old battlefields. On the right they reached the line of the Somme from St. Christ to Cléry and on the left Bullecourt. Horne, employing the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions south of the Scarpe and the 51st Division north of that river, won Monchy-le-Preux and Greenland Hill—scenes of so many bitter conflicts—and reached a line within striking distance of the famous Quéant-Drocourt switch.

It became clear, from the stiffening of the resistance and an increase of gun-fire, that the Germans intended to hold a line along the Somme to Péronne and along the ridges north of that point. The key of the position was Mont St. Quentin, north of Péronne. "It was a veritable bastion, the capture of which would enable us to enfilade the enemy's positions covering the river to the south and threaten the safety of his whole line." [1] Its natural strength was enhanced by belts of wire and its defence had been entrusted to crack troops—the *2nd Guards Division*.

[1] *The Story of the Fourth Army*, p. 97.

The 5th Australian Brigade, which was detailed for its capture, crossed the river from south to north near Cléry on the night of the 30th/31st and, in an impetuous and daring assault, gained a footing on the slopes of the hill, from which repeated counter-attacks failed to eject it. Then, for three days, the whole Australian Corps, skilfully handled and fighting most gallantly, sought to exploit the success. It captured the "Mount" and Péronne, but losses were heavy, especially in officers.

Many V.C.'s were won for intrepid leadership against machine-gun posts which, as usual, formed the backbone of the defence. There is room here for only one instance of bravery. Private W. Currey, single-handed, rushed a 77-mm. gun which was causing his battalion severe loss and killed the entire crew. Later on, three privates manned this gun and, with it, silenced a number of machine guns which were holding up the advance.

The Australians, in this operation, captured 2,600 prisoners taken from 5 different divisions. On their left, the III Corps, which had also made valuable progress, captured 2,300, bringing the total taken by British troops since the 8th August to 36,000.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

IDENTIFYING PRISONERS

The identification and interrogation of prisoners gave journalists and artists on both sides a splendid chance for harrowing depictions of what would now be called "third degree" methods practised by the authorities. In point of fact, however, the close questioning of captives is an elementary necessity of war, for in many cases a badge off a cap, the name of a man's home town, or any information that he can be made to impart verbally, is of immense value to his captors. The innumerable raids made with the sole object of securing prisoners for information purposes prove this. As to *how* information might be obtained in certain instances—that is another matter, also to be classified under the heading of "military necessities."

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CHAPTER LXXXIV

MESOPOTAMIA: THE LAST PHASE

After four years of fighting, of many privations, and of heavy casualties, the campaign in Mesopotamia was ended with the final overthrow of the Turks. On November 3rd, 1918, Mosul was occupied by the British. The story of Mesopotamia is a sad one. Although victory, in the end, crowned our efforts, it was achieved only after grievous loss of life. In the beginning the objective was a strictly limited one, but when it was decided to embark upon a more ambitious venture it would have been better if, before proceeding, a more accurate estimate of the needs in men and material had been worked out. Once again it was nearly a question of our losing every battle but the last one, and the campaign in Mesopotamia will be remembered as something akin to the Boer War and to Gallipoli.

ANOTHER hot weather now lay before the troops: for most of them, the second they had spent in Mesopotamia; for a few hardy veterans, the third. In 1917 the sun was hotter and more malignant than in either of the preceding years. The Baghdadis declared that it was the hottest season within the memory of living man.

A Fine River Service

Nevertheless, there was less sickness in the Army than in 1916. General Maude was able to do far more than any of his predecessors for the comfort of all ranks. The original fleet of half-a-dozen river steamers plying up and down the Tigris had now grown into an enormous organisation, under the Inland Water Transport, that controlled no fewer than 918 vessels, with another 148 on order from India. There were many hundred miles of railway available, where before there had been none. In spite of the exceptionally low level of the river, communications with the base at Basra never failed.

Plant for making ice and soda was sent from India, and these and other comforts, virtually essential to the health of Europeans in a hot climate, were made available for the first time. The market-gardens of Baghdad and the rich Euphrates area supplied fresh fruit and vegetables. For the first time, too, leave was opened on a considerable scale to India.

The I Corps was encamped around Samarra, with a detachment holding Falluja on the Euphrates. The III Corps lay around Sumaika and Balad, with detachments on the Adhaim and the Diyala. The Cavalry Division spent the summer around Baghdad, where the 15th Division was also concentrating.

Here in Upper Mesopotamia one could always be sure of a cool breeze by night, however high the theromometer might mount by day. Life was altogether a great deal better than it had been in the hot weather of 1916, when the Army sweltered in the blood-soaked and barren desert round Kut, where every landmark reminded them of the bitterness of their failure to relieve their comrades in the beleaguered town. The recollection of their recent victories now acted like a powerful tonic to maintain the spirits of all ranks.

On the Diyala side there was some movement in June and again in August, but no serious fighting. The Russians—who, it will be remembered, had come down from Persia to join hands with General Maude, and had been holding the line of the Diyala—were obliged to retire, owing to the difficulty of supplying their troops under the chaotic conditions of the Revolution.

They withdrew towards Kermanshah, and we occupied Balad Ruz without opposition. Later, in August, our airmen reported that the Turks were entrenching themselves at Shahraban. Two columns were sent to evict them, but the enemy decamped hastily to the Jabal Hamrin, leaving us in possession.

A Hot-weather Episode

The only serious affair that took place during the hot weather of 1917 was an attack on Ramadi by the 7th Infantry Brigade. The Turks were holding this place with a force consisting of some 1,000 rifles, 6 guns, and a number of Arab auxiliaries; and from here they were able to control the supply of water in the Sakhlawiya canal, from which a great stretch of fertile country occupied by us was irrigated. In July the brigade at Falluja was ordered to advance and clear out the enemy.

Every precaution was taken to mitigate the effects of the heat. Troops were to march only by night; tents were to be taken to give shelter by day to units not actually fighting; ice was provided for the immediate treatment of heat-stroke cases. On the day that the troops were due to march out of Falluja, the temperature made an unexpected jump of 10 degrees. General Maude offered to call off the operations, but the local commander decided to carry on.

On July 10th, the British force was concentrated within striking distance of Ramadi. At 1 a.m. on the 11th, the troops marched out to take up their positions for the attack. The 91st Punjabis and 2/7th Gurkhas were in touch with the enemy outposts shortly before dawn, but the task of driving them in and reconnoitring the main Turkish position took longer than had been anticipated. It was not until 8.15 a.m. that the Connaught Rangers, Gurkhas, and Punjabis had worked forward to a position whence an assault could be launched, and it was reckoned that after 10 a.m. the full heat of the sun would make active operations impossible.

A series of untoward accidents now occurred to delay progress. Two artillery forward observation officers were killed one after the other, and the telephone lines cut by shell fire. The line to brigade was also cut, and the linesmen killed. The final disaster was a dust-storm that blotted out the entire landscape and made visual signalling impossible. It was now too late to attack, and the unfortunate troops had to lie out all day under the sun and the Turkish fire.

Casualties from the Heat

But for the gallantry of the M.T. drivers, who drove their Ford vans with supplies of water almost into the firing line, the casualties from heat-stroke would have been even heavier than they were. The battalions engaged each lost close on 200 men, more than half of them from the heat, and it was decided to withdraw that night. The retirement was carried out unmolested, except for the long-range attentions of the ubiquit-

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

TURKISH AMMUNITION

British soldiers at work in a captured Turkish ammunition-dump at Ramadi. The accompanying pages relate how after an unsuccessful attempt on this village in July, 1917, the British, under General Maude, defeated the Turks here, capturing their commander, 3,450 other prisoners, 13 guns, and Ramadi itself, on September 28th, 1917. The locality came into the news again on February 20th, 1918, when General Marshall advanced up the Euphrates and captured Khan Aby Rayat, 14 miles north of Ramadi.

ous Arabs. The moral of this fiasco was taken to heart, and henceforward the hot weather was respected by both the Turks and ourselves as a "close season" for active fighting.

During the summer many intelligence reports came in, showing that the Turks intended to make a big effort to retake Baghdad early in the autumn. There was even talk of German troops being moved to this front. Strange rumours of a new German formation called the *Yilderim* (Turkish for "lightning") *Corps* were heard. But there was some doubt about where the Turkish thrust would materialise. It might come down the Euphrates, down the Tigris, or through Persia, via the Diyala, where, since the Revolution, the weakness of the Russians invited trouble.

During the remainder of the hot weather, preparations were made to meet the coming storm. Two new divisions, the 17th and 18th, were promised from India, together with a new cavalry brigade. Meanwhile the Turkish force at Ramadi, the site of our failure in July, had been strongly reinforced, and constituted a menace to Baghdad and a rallying-point for disaffected Arabs in the Euphrates area. General Maude resolved to get his blow in first.

General Brooking and his 15th Division were now occupying Falluja. They had held Nasiriya, on the Euphrates, ever since its capture in 1915, and this river had come to be regarded as their special province. Curiously enough, too, the Turkish commander now opposed to them, Ahmed Bey, had also been on the Euphrates front since 1915. These old enemies were now about to try a last scrap together.

It was not until the end of September that a column of sufficient strength was concentrated within striking distance of Ramadi. This consisted of the 6th Cavalry Brigade and the 12th and 42nd Infantry Brigades. It was evident from the aeroplane reports on the Turkish dispositions that Ahmed Bey expected our attack to come along the line of the Euphrates, as it had done in July.

The Vital Ford Van

General Brooking did everything to encourage this idea, whilst at the same time making preparations to turn the Turks' right flank and establish the cavalry brigade right across their line of retreat. The enemy believed such a move to be impossible, owing to the waterless nature of the country on this flank. The key to our success was a carefully-organised fleet of Ford vans, which, in the course of the coming operations, were to transport many thousands of gallons of water from the Euphrates to the troops in the firing-line.

The enemy held an advanced position about four miles east of Ramadi on Mushaid Ridge, a low line of dunes running north and south from the Euphrates to the Habbaniya Lake. On the night of the 27th September, the British force marched out from its camp, and the 12th Brigade, on the right, took up a position whence an assault could be launched at dawn on this ridge. On the left, the 42nd Brigade pushed on into the gap between the ridge and the lake, driving in the enemy patrols, and by 3.30 a.m. they were in possession of the dam over the Euphrates Valley Canal. This was the only means of passage, and the sappers at once set about making it passable for all arms.

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At dawn a heavy bombardment was opened on Mushaid Ridge, under cover of which two battalions made a great show of preparing to assault. Meanwhile the bulk of the two brigades was pressing on over the canal to the south. The Turks, finding themselves outflanked, retired on their main position.

As soon as the infantry had crossed the canal, they were followed by the cavalry brigade, which disappeared into the blue at about 7 a.m., and, making a wide sweep to the south, arrived in the early afternoon at a point on the Aleppo road about five miles west of Ramadi. Here they proceeded to dig themselves in along a series of low ridges that lay right across the line of retreat of the Turks.

The enemy was now surrounded on three sides, with an unfordable river on the fourth. By nightfall the iron net had been drawn closer; and after two dashing assaults our infantry had established themselves firmly on the Ramadi and Aziziya Ridges overlooking the town.

The cavalry spent the night digging in and preparing for the Turkish attempt to break out of the trap. The six 13-pounders of "V" Battery R.H.A. and the machine guns of the cavalry brigade were brought up in close support behind the trenches, ready to bring their fire to bear on the road by which the enemy must come.

The Turks Attack in Vain

The alarm was given just after 3 a.m. by a patrol of the 14th Hussars, which fell back closely followed by a long column of Turkish infantry. The enemy fought bravely, and came on again and again, so that in the morning their dead were found heaped within 50 yards of the Hussars' trenches; but nothing could stand against the hail of lead. A few succeeded in swimming the Euphrates, and one small party slipped unobserved through the crops on the river-bank, only to be rounded up in the morning by the armoured cars. But the encircling net remained unbroken, and the position of the Turks was now desperate. At dawn the 42nd Brigade, on the right, held its ground, whilst the 12th Brigade pushed on gallantly, in face of a punishing fire and repeated counter-attacks, to gain the bridge over the Aziziya Canal, by which the Turkish guns and wheeled transport escaping from Ramadi would have to pass.

The regiments had become intermingled in the long advance, and the final assault that carried the bridge was made by a mixed party of Queen's, Punjabis, and Garhwalis, under the command of Captain Rodgerson of the Garhwalis, the senior surviving officer in the firing-line.

It was a most gallant charge. "As they came over the open, three guns in front of them, firing point-blank over open sights, poured in shrapnel, raking the ground and churning up the sand in a deadly spray. Half-way across there was a deep, dry nullah with steep banks. It was an ideal place to hold, but there was no stopping. In a moment they were into and over it, leaving a Lewis-gun trained on the gun teams at 400 yards. Then they were into the battery with the bayonet. The Turks died gamely round their guns."[1]

Captain Rodgerson now had with him a bare 100 men, and he set them to work at once digging a pot-hook trench round the guns. A few more small parties, that had been outdistanced in the assault, came up on his right and left, but the nearest supports were miles in rear. In the circumstances it came as something of a relief, as well as a surprise, when a white flag suddenly appeared on the mud wall in front, and a small group of Turks came out unarmed.

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

Wholesale Surrender

Eight men were sent out to collect them. Then a "crocodile" emerged from the nullah. "I've seen some crocodiles," said a very junior subaltern to "Eye-Witness" next day, "but never one that bucked me like that." A seemingly endless procession of Turks came out with their hands up and surrendered—2,000 of them all told.

Now white flags went up all along the Turkish line, and the prisoners began to come in. A few hours later our tired troops were marching into Ramadi in a blinding dust-storm, happy in the knowledge that they had captured Ahmed Bey and the entire Turkish force opposed to them, horse, foot, guns, and baggage.

The blow came as a complete surprise to the Turks. The news of it was still unknown to the corps on the Tigris a full day after the event. Early on the

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The ethics of war (if it may be said to have any) are decidedly paradoxical; for while one whom the High Powers designate as your foe remains hale and hearty, your business is to kill him. If, however, he is not killed but has, in effect, ceased to be a combatant, you are expected, should he fall into your hands, to treat him as humanely as one of your own pals. His rôle, meantime, is to reck nothing of your attempt on his life, which so unfortunately preceded his own on yours, but to accept with true gratitude all that you do for his comfort. Here a wounded Turk is accepting a drink from a British Tommy.

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morning of the 30th, an enemy aeroplane flew low over the camp, and was on the point of alighting when the pilot suddenly discovered the change of occupation and made off, pursued by our rifle-fire.

General Brooking's clean sweep of the Turks on the Euphrates dealt a smashing blow to the morale of the Turks, and went a long way towards raising our prestige with the Baghdadis and the Arabs. Ramadi was generally recognised by these gentry as being the drop-curtain for their late masters in this part of the world.

General Maude's next blow was directed against the Turkish *XIII Corps* in the Jebel Hamrin. All through the summer, from their position astride the gorge where the river emerges from the hills, the Turks had been able to interfere with the supply of water that feeds the canals in the rich Diyala area. The range, too, formed a screen behind which they could manœuvre and at any moment launch an attack at our flank on the Tigris. The Russians had originally undertaken to look after this area, but now that they were no longer able to carry on their work, there was nothing for it but to do the job ourselves.

After the disaster that he had suffered at Ramadi, however, the enemy was not taking any chances. It was difficult to conceal our preparations. From his eyrie in the Jebel Hamrin he could see the whole plain below, spread out like a map. The dust of convoys and the smoke of trains soon put him wise to what was afoot.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

THE SITE OF SUICIDE BRIDGE

Here we have a modern photograph of the crude culvert which is all that remains to mark the whereabouts of Suicide Bridge across the Ypres-Comines Canal. The path over the culvert leads, on the left, to Chester Farm, and on the right to Arundel and Norfolk Lodge. In the background is Spoil Bank. Suicide Bridge owes its name to the deadly sniping to which it was subjected.

The Plan Works Admirably

Our plan was for an elaborate converging movement, in which the greater part of the 13th and 14th Divisions and the 7th Cavalry Brigade were employed. The operations were carried through without a hitch; everything went off like clockwork. On the night of the 18th October, the patrols of our centre column, the 35th Brigade, rushed the enemy picket on the bridge where the Khanikin road crosses the Ruz Canal. Next morning the brigade joined hands with our right column, the 36th and 37th Brigades, which were working along the Jebel Hamrin to roll up the Turkish flank.

By 7.30 a.m. the cavalry had got round in rear of the enemy, and were blocking the Khanikin road on the far side of the hills. But our converging columns closed on thin air. Ali Ihsan Bey was a cool hand: he had slipped away with his whole force during the night, and in the morning an aeroplane reconnaissance reported that his columns were retiring in leisurely fashion down the Qara Teppe road, leaving the only available bridge in flames behind them.

However, if we had failed to bring off another coup like Ramadi, we had at any rate achieved the object for which we had come, and that with hardly a casualty. Work was at once begun on con-

Photo: G. T. Watson.

LOCK 7, YPRES CANAL

This lock is a few hundred yards west of Suicide Bridge, and is one of the few untouched relics still to be found on the Flanders battlefields. The effects of bombardment here need no imagination to picture them, even after two decades. The farm on the right of the photograph is Arundel—or rather its successor; on the left is another view of Spoil Bank.

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

LOCK 8 ON THE CANAL

Lock 8 is situated just east of the sharp bend in the canal, where it turns north towards Ypres. The Ypres—St. Eloi—Messines road crosses the water at this point—nowadays, as may be seen, by an earthen bank, but in War days by a bridge. The old lock-gates, broken and rotting, still lie where the War left them, and there has been no attempt either to repair or to demolish the crumbling walls.

solidating our hold on this part of the world. Roads were built, and the railway carried through the hills. In a few months' time it had reached Khanikin.

"The Jebel Hamrin seemed homely to most of the force. A Highlander described it as 'a bit of old Scotland'; a South African veteran was reminded of the Basuto frontier, and an Anzac of some antipodean haunt in which he had fished and shot."[1] It was the very antithesis of the flat, deltaic mud of the Tigris valley.

Jebel Hamrin is Arabic for "Red Hills." The whole place was a mass of colour. There were fish in the pools, and small game of all kinds abounded. Early as it was in the year, there were already flowers about, and the ground at the foot of the red sandstone range was carpeted with the mauve autumn crocuses. There were many who envied the garrison left behind here.

On the Tigris Front

The scene of action now shifts to the Tigris front, where the advanced troops of our I Corps—the 7th Division—held an entrenched camp covering the railhead, with the bulk of the 3rd Division still in their summer camps along the line of the railway. On the morning of October 22nd, our cavalry patrols encountered Turkish infantry about 8 miles to the north of Samarra, and it soon became clear that the *XVIII Corps* was advancing on both banks of the river. This may, or may not, have been a belated demonstration designed to take the pressure off the *XIII Corps*; but it offered just the opportunity for which General Maude had been waiting.

The leading infantry brigades of the 3rd Division were at once ordered to close up on Samarra; and on the night of the 24th, the I Corps marched out to attack the Turks at dawn. When dawn broke, however, it was found that the enemy had fallen back in the night and taken up a position at Daur, some 10 miles away, where they were busy entrenching themselves.

It looked as though, if we played our cards carefully, we might be able to throw our net round them, as we had done at Ramadi. While the Cavalry Division concentrated at Samarra, the infantry accordingly marched back there, travelling by night so as to avoid being observed.

On the night of the 1st/2nd November, the troops once more marched to their positions of assembly: the 21st Brigade on the left bank of the Tigris, the remainder of the 7th Division, together with the 8th Infantry Brigade, on the right bank, while the Cavalry Division made a wide sweep to come in on the Turkish flank and cut off the retreat.

At dawn, the 28th Brigade launched its attack. Advancing rapidly under a brisk fire, the 56th Rifles carried the trenches on their front by 6 a.m. without meeting any great opposition. A short halt was now made while the Leicesters came up on the right of the

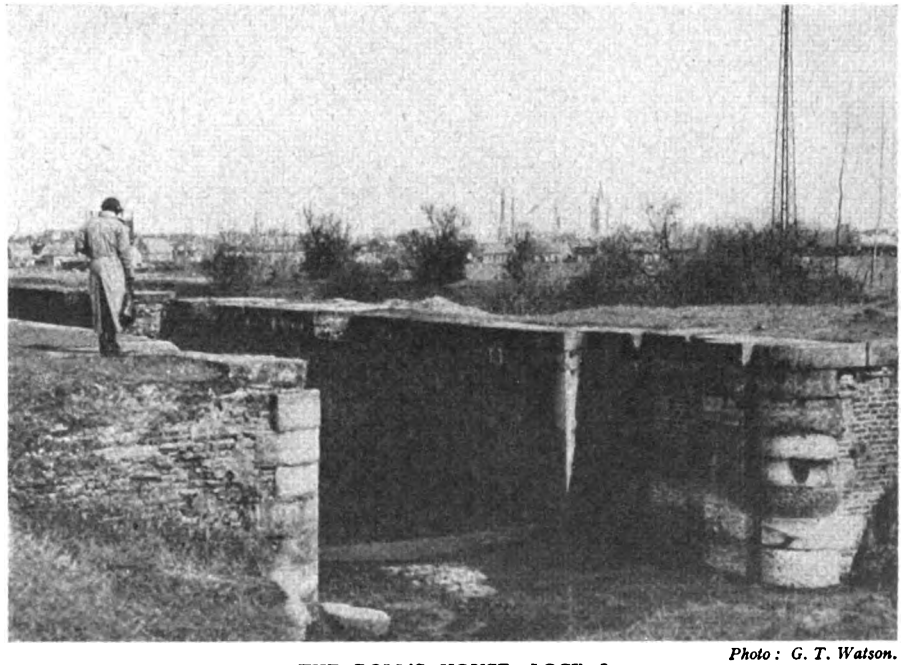

Photo: G. T. Watson.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE, LOCK 9

This lock, the last before Ypres is reached, stands 500 yards north of the Ypres—Kemmel road, and due west of Shrapnel Corner. Like the other features of the now disused canal, it is still in an untouched war-time condition. In the background is Ypres itself, while trucks on the railway which crosses the road at Shrapnel Corner may be seen on the extreme right.

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTER THE ACTION OF TIKRIT

The British, again under General Maude, defeated the Turks before Tikrit—or Tekrit, as it is often written—on November 5th, 1917. This photograph shows men of the 1/8th Gurkhas, 21st Brigade, 7th Division, in a captured Turkish trench after the skirmish. Tikrit stands on the right or west bank of the Tigris 100 miles above Baghdad.

Rifles and the 51st Sikhs on their left; and then the brigade continued its advance. The Turks put up more of a stand in their second line, but by 9.30 a.m. this also had been carried, and they were everywhere falling back towards Tikrit.

A Disappointing Day

Once again the enemy had slipped away. When dawn broke the Cavalry Division had reached its place of assembly, but its advance was held up by the gun and machine-gun fire of a strong force that the Turkish commander had posted on his right rear to guard against the danger of having his line of retreat cut. He was taking no chances.

We had gained an easy success at Daur, but it was a disappointing day. Nevertheless, the infantry had every reason to be proud of their performance. They had reached their positions of assembly without a hitch after a 20-mile night-march over difficult country, and then gone straight into the attack.

Next morning our patrols were soon in touch with the Turkish position at Tikrit. The trenches extended from the river for about a mile to the west, and then bent back towards the north-west and north for another five miles. It was a strong position, particularly in the sector near the river, where the ground was very broken. The Turks had made skilful use of the many deep nullahs, and the line here was a perfect maze of trenches and machine-gun posts.

General Cobbe, commanding the I Corps, decided to attack on the river front, so that his infantry might have the advantage of the broken ground in their advance; anything was better than attacking over the open country to the west, where there was not a vestige of cover. The Cavalry Division guarded our left flank, with orders to pin the enemy to his ground and watch for any signs of withdrawal. The whole of the Corps artillery was to support the attack.

When dawn broke, the 8th Infantry Brigade and the 4th Brigade R.F.A., forming the advance-guard, had just reached their position of assembly after a long night-march. The Turkish gunners were waiting for them, and poured in a heavy fire. The 8th Brigade deployed, and advanced as steadily as if on parade over a mile of open country until it reached the first nullah. Clearing out the Turkish advanced troops at the point of the bayonet, the brigade carried straight on until it was within assaulting distance of the first line. Here a halt was called whilst the artillery registered on the trenches.

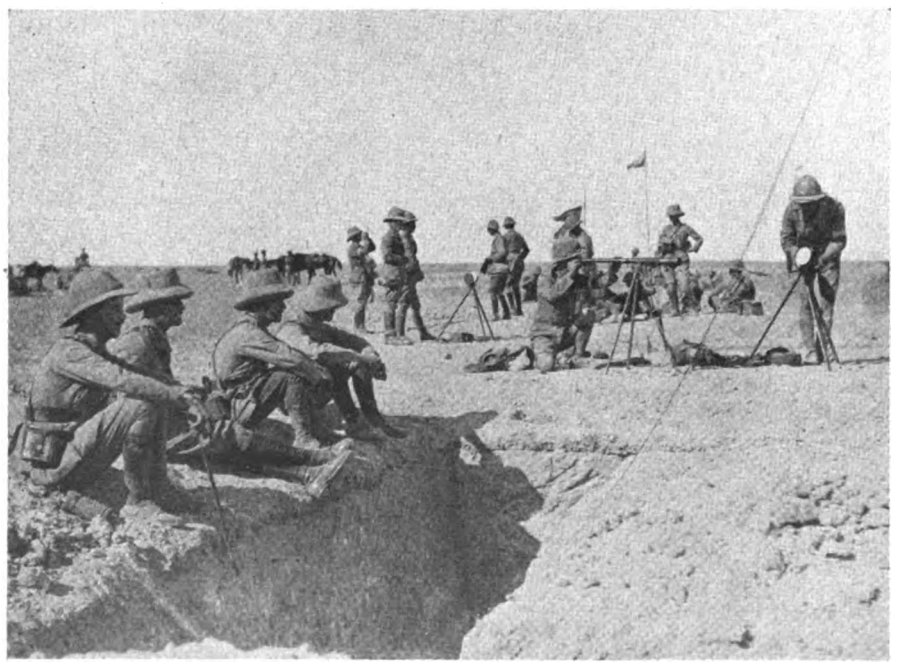

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A DISTINGUISHED OFFICER

In this illustration we see advanced H.Q. of the I Corps and 7th Division among the captured trenches before Tikrit. Among the seated officers is Captain Kermit Roosevelt, who served with the Royal Engineers and the 14th Light Armoured Motor Battery in Mesopotamia, and afterwards joined the American forces in France, where he won the M.C.

Anglo-Indian Assault

At about 11.30 the assault was launched, and the 59th Rifles, 47th Sikhs, and 124th Baluchis, with the 1st Manchesters in support, carried the trenches on their front and pushed right on to the third line. Here they found themselves in a perfect rabbit-warren of trenches, and for the next three hours the fight swayed to and fro as each side counter-attacked in turn. The losses of the 8th Brigade amounted to 30 per

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cent. Meanwhile the battalions of the 21st Brigade had come up on either flank, and were also hotly engaged.

The ground was very difficult, and part of the 21st Brigade lost direction. "Eye-Witness" writes: "I found Henderson with a small group of Manchesters holding a forward salient, enfiladed on both sides, and with his right flank completely in the air. He had just driven off a counter-attack, and soon after I came up he received a telephone message that the Seaforths and 125th Rifles were going to attack.

"The Manchesters thought the Seaforths were on their right, and put up a blue flag to mark the end of their line: but, to their surprise, a heavy barrage now opened on an area in their left rear, at a point we thought clear of enemy. We saw our line rise and advance slowly under a most effective bombardment. Through out glasses we could see the men's kilts. This was the Seaforths' attack, several miles away from where we had expected it."[1]

The 14th Battery R.F.A. had been supporting the 59th Rifles all day, and had sent out a forward observation officer with them that morning. The telephone-wire was cut repeatedly, and the linesmen who went out to repair it were all hit. The two signallers with the F.O.O. were both hit, and he tried to get in touch with his battery by helio until a bullet put this instrument also out of action. The battery commander, ordered at the last moment to switch his fire on to the trenches in front of the Seaforths, ranged his guns and observed their fire from the top of a limber pole. It was a magnificent attack. The Jocks chanced the last few seconds of the barrage, and went into the enemy with the bayonet. Those who bolted offered a target to our guns and machine guns, and a few moments later the Highlanders were into the second line.

Auld Acquaintances

The Turkish *51st*, *52nd*, and *14th Divisions*, who fought at Tikrit that day, had been opposed to our 7th Division since the beginning of the Kut relief operations in January, 1916. "The sight of the advancing tartan of the Seaforths or the Black Watch was now associated in their minds with blank foreboding and the bitterness of defeat. It was as though the spirit of the Scots who had fallen in the earlier battles marched beside their young successors in every attack."[2]

The Arabs called the Highlanders *Abu Reish*, Father of the Feather, from the red hackle that the Black Watch wore in their helmets; and they shared with the Turks a wholesome dread of those who wore the kilt.

All day the cavalry had been hanging on to the Turkish left, in accordance with their orders, coming under a desultory fire from the Turkish guns, and feeling that they were exercising little influence on the fortunes of the battle. Immediately, however, after

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WAITING TO ADVANCE

Reserve troops are shown waiting to advance during the action of Tikrit, November, 1917. This place, an isolated townlet amid a stretch of barren country unrelieved by any patch of cultivation, was occupied, but not held, on November 6th, the day after the Turkish defeat. Tikrit is famous historically as the birthplace of the great Saladin.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CROSSING THE WADI AQ SU

This photograph shows the first armoured cars to cross the Wadi Aq Su at Tus-Khurmatli, just over 100 miles due north of Baghdad. The first passage of the Aq Su was forced by British cavalry on April 28th, 1918, and Tus-Khurmatli was captured one day later. The Turks were retreating very rapidly at this time.

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*
[2] *Ibid.*

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AMID THE MARSHES OF THE SCARPE

The desolate and melancholy scene displayed above forms part of the marshy country of the Scarpe east of Arras, the nearest village being Fampoux, slightly west of the marsh. This place was involved in the Arras battles of both 1917 and 1918. In the former it was among the villages which fell to our opening assault of April 9th, the 4th Division being its captors. The smaller British cemetery which to-day exists there was begun at that time by the 4th and 34th Divisions, and continued in 1918 by the Guards Division. It records 99 U.K. and 19 South African burials.

the successful attack of the Seaforths and 125th Rifles, the commander of the 7th Cavalry Brigade saw his chance. The 13th Hussars were ordered to charge and complete the rout of the enemy.

The dust and smoke of the artillery barrage was still hanging over the ground, and under cover of this, "B" and "C" Squadrons of the Hussars reached without being observed the line held by our infantry. From here Captain Robinson saw a body of several hundred Turks massing about 1,000 yards to the left. He wheeled the two squadrons through the ranks of our cheering infantry and charged, going right through the enemy.

Captain Robinson was killed at close quarters, but the two squadrons, after passing through the Turks, turned about and went through them again. Thereafter, as it was now too dark to pursue further, the cavalry withdrew, the supporting squadrons covering the withdrawal of the wounded and of men whose horses had been killed.

A Successful Cavalry Charge

This was a most gallant affair, calling to mind the charge of the 13th Hussars at Lajj and of the 32nd Cavalry at Istabulat. The squadrons came under considerable rifle, machine-gun, and artillery fire, but, all things considered, the casualties were not heavy—about 30 men and double as many horses in the two squadrons. They had killed more than that number of Turks with the sword; and the moral effect of a successful cavalry charge on the infantry who have to endure it is very great.

The Turks did not stand again that day. Our troops spent the night on the ground they had won, with battle-patrols well out to the front. During the hours of darkness, the Turkish gunners fired off all the ammunition they were unable to carry away, and in the morning the remnants of the *XVIII Corps* were trudging wearily up the Tigris well to the north of Tikrit.

Our infantry patrols entered Tikrit at dawn. It was a picturesque old walled village, built on a bluff overlooking the Tigris, with the houses standing on the sheer edge of a cliff that rises abruptly 100 feet from the shingly bed of the river. The enemy had burnt some dumps of stores before leaving, but a considerable quantity of material fell into our hands, including the burnt-out hull of the steamer *Julnar*, with which we had made a last desperate attempt to revictual Kut in April, 1916.

The usual dirty white rags were flying from the houses in token of surrender,

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and the inhabitants were profuse in their protestations of friendliness. The few survivors of Townshend's unfortunate garrison could have told a very different story of their reception, 18 months before, at the hands of the same Arabs, as the following extract from the diary of a captured British officer shows:

"At about 11 a.m. reached the Arab town of Tikrit, a miserable place, standing on high undulating ground. We met about 80 unfortunate British and Indian soldiers who were standing at the doorway of a yard where they were herded together. They looked ghastly. . . . These were sick left behind by one of our columns; many had dysentery, others were fairly fit, but had no boots for marching. They received only a ration of wheat. . . . There were no guards over them, and they were completely abandoned. Sometimes when a sick man would crawl out of the hovel they lived in, Arabs would throw stones and chase him back into the yard.

"We spent the evening with the men. Baines (a medical officer) did his best for the sick, and the General (Melliss) left some gold with them." [1]

The wheel had now turned full circle.

Death of a Great General

On November 18th, General Maude died of cholera in Baghdad, after an illness lasting only two days. It was generally supposed that he had caught the infection through a cup of coffee that he was offered and drank—the ceremonious custom usual in the East—at an entertainment given by the Jewish community in the town. But, even if this were the case, there were no real grounds for suspecting foul play. Cholera was rife in Baghdad at the time, and there had been a number of cases amongst the men of the regiment doing guard duty at G.H.Q. and at the Commander-in-Chief's house.

The news of his death aroused a concern in Great Britain and throughout the Empire only less deep than that felt by the troops whom he had so often led to victory. Indeed, all ranks of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force had come to look on the familiar form of their commander as the very embodiment of victory.

"He was to the army in Mesopotamia what Lord Kitchener was to the British armies in Great Britain and in Europe; and his death, like Kitchener's, was the occasion for a host of wild rumours. The army that he com-

[1] Extract (dated June 10th, 1916) from the diary of Captain A. J. Shakeshaft, 2nd Norfolks. Quoted in *Official History*.

Photo: Keystone.

ON THE BANKS OF THE SCARPE IN PEACE-TIME

At the beginning of the Arras battle of March 28th, 1918, Fampoux was about 1½ miles behind the front line, in the area of the 4th Division—the northernmost division of the Third Army. Soon after noon the 2nd Seaforths of the 10th Brigade fell back, fighting hard, on the ruins, where our line was consolidated at the close of the battle. It is interesting to note that the *Official History* mentions the very swamp illustrated in our war-time view; this marsh was quite impassable, and formed a valuable protection at a weak part of our line. The tank seen was one attached to the 51st Division in late August, 1918.

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manded, like that of Alexander, was not wholly, or even mainly, professional, and the machine needed animating with a personal feeling. There is no more touching scene in history than that enacted at Babylon when the scarred veterans of fifty battles, who had mutinied for one more look at their idol, filed in silence before the dying king, Alexander, who though speechless could smile recognition and raise a hand when a well-remembered face went by. Would that a similar observance might have marked the passing of General Maude, to inspire generations to come, and to emphasise the personal nature of the office that he held." [1]

Apart from his brilliance as a commander, to which the magnitude of the achievements of the army under his command will always bear sufficient witness, it is as a gallant and lovable man, a great gentleman and soldier in the best sense of the word, that those who fought under his orders will wish to remember him. " Everyone who met him felt his personal magnetism, and those who knew him best loved him. His sympathy and consideration were well known to his troops. On the eve of any operations he would send them encouraging messages, and he made a point of presenting medal ribbons himself, immediately after the action, to those who had distinguished themselves. In spite of pressure of work, he would often travel long distances by aeroplane for this purpose." [1]

Like Alexander Before Him

Like Alexander the Great, who died at Babylon in 323 B.C., and the Roman Emperor Julian, who died at Samarra in A.D. 363, Maude had conquered the ungrateful soil of Mesopotamia only to become its victim. But, at that moment, the men who had helped him to make history were concerned neither with parallels from the dead past, nor with the verdict of future historians on his and their achievement.

" They only knew that of the handful of fresh graves in the British cemetery in Baghdad, one covered the bones of the man they could least spare, of the Commander whose quiet and confident smile was an assurance that no sacrifice he demanded of them would be in vain." [1]

[1] Arnold Wilson, *Loyalties.*

Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

Ibid.

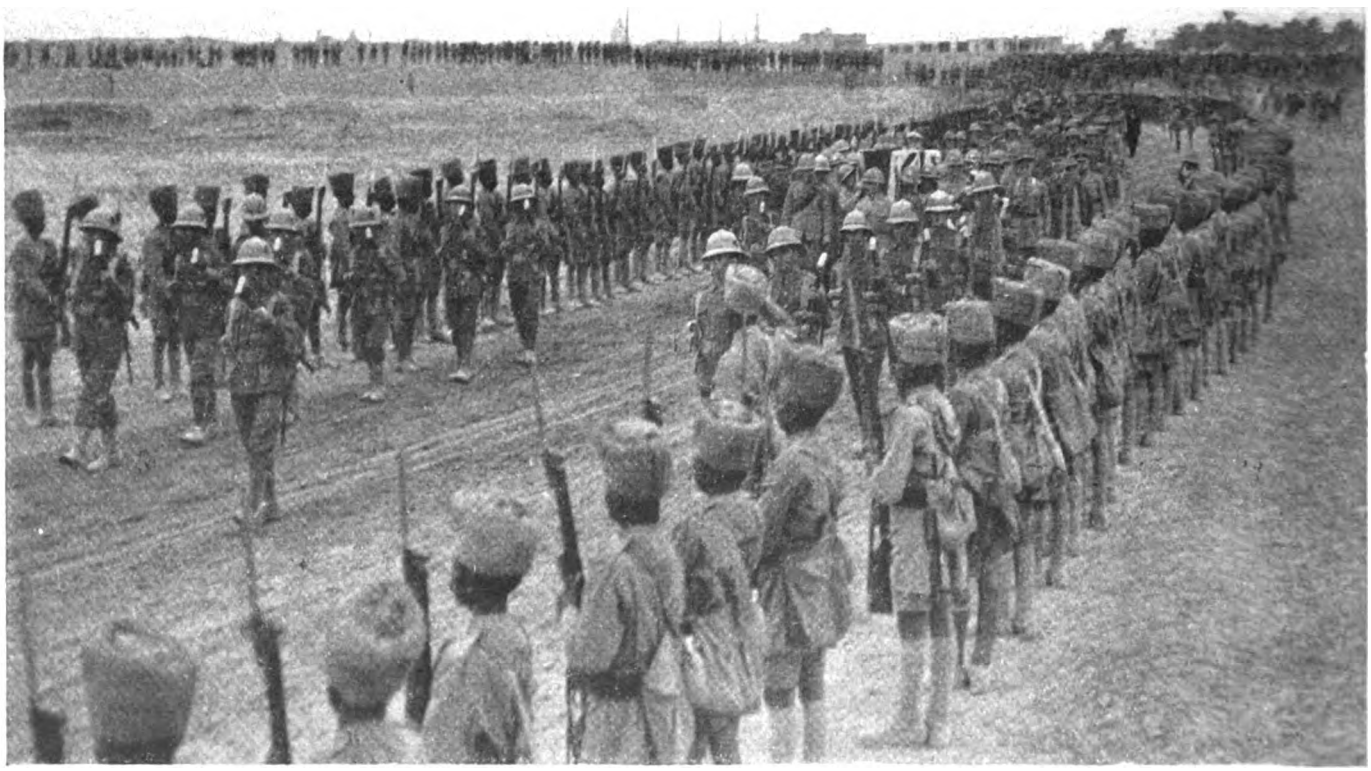

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GENERAL MAUDE GOES TO HIS REST

Lieut.-General Sir Stanley Maude, one of the most successful soldiers and most attractive personalities to serve in the Great War, died of cholera at Baghdad on November 19th, 1917, at the height of his career. His sudden decease was the more tragic in that, after escaping numerous plots against his life, he caught the fatal disease among friends; for it was at a native entertainment given in his honour that he came into contact with the infection. Cholera was rife in Baghdad at the time. Above is a photograph taken at the General's funeral.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE GRAVE OF A GREAT MAN

On the preceding page we showed a scene during General Maude's funeral; here we reproduce a photograph of his grave, simple even as he himself would have wished it. It lies in the military cemetery outside the North Gate at Baghdad. A little strangely, perhaps, the only detailed account of the celebration at which Maude caught his fatal illness is furnished by an American writer who had gone to Mesopotamia to "write up" the doings of the victorious army, and who was a guest of the General. It appears from this narrative that the germ was contained in some cold milk which Maude poured into a cup of coffee. The American partook of the same coffee, but without milk.

The effect on the campaign caused by the removal of General Maude's guiding hand proved less serious than might have been expected. He had done his work well, and when General Marshall, the commander of the III Corps, took over the reins, the new Commander-in-Chief inherited an army that, in the words used by the Duke of Wellington of his old Peninsula veterans, "would go anywhere and do anything."

Our position in Baghdad was now secure. The opening of Allenby's offensive in Palestine had drawn off the Turkish and German reinforcements originally destined for Mesopotamia. General Marshall's problem was to ensure that the force under his command pulled its weight in the general scheme of the War as a whole. This could be done only by taking the offensive and carrying the war into the enemy's country to an extent hitherto undreamt of.

The Turkish soldier was beginning to feel the strain of all the hard fighting that he had been through. He was to show in the coming months that he could still put up a gallant fight, but his nerves were not what they had been; he found it increasingly difficult to hold his machine gun straight as the attacking line drew nearer and he could distinguish the helmets and pagris of the British and Indian battalions that had already worsted him on many a hard-fought field.

Three Sources, One Brotherhood

The British civilian soldier had shown that he could stand punishment as well as his Regular comrade. There was little to choose now between Regular, Territorial, or Kitchener's man. They had all learnt the trade of fighting in the same school of actual war. Hard knocks taken together had made them one and welded them into as fine a fighting machine as the world has seen. With this army General Marshall was now about to reap the fruits of victory, and, working hand-in-hand with Allenby in Palestine, to deal the enemy a series of swift hammer-blows that would bring the Ottoman Empire to its knees.

General Marshall's first action after taking over the command was to strike another blow at his old antagonists, Ali Ihsan and his *XIII Corps*, who, from their base at Kifri on the far side of the Jebel Hamrin, were still a menace to the main road that leads up the Diyala into Persia.

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A GALLERY OF SOUVENIRS

Photo: G. T. Watson.

A tiny proportion of the remarkable collection of war relics unearthed, and continuing to be unearthed, by farmers in the neighbourhood of Hill 60. These are purchased by an enterprising Belgian ex-serviceman, who resells them to souvenir-hunters. His supply of material seems to be without end, and in this representative display one can easily recognise aerial torpedoes, trench mortars, aeroplane engines, steel breast-plates, many rifles, and (suspended from the tree in the centre) a harness such as was used by the Germans for sky-illumination rockets. Grimmer reminders of the past, in the shape of corpses, also come to light not infrequently.

With the collapse of the Russians, there was some prospect of our having to send troops into this part of the world to counteract the activities of the hordes of German and Turkish agents who were trying to stir up trouble there. At this time, too, there were several thousands of German and Austrian prisoners of war in Trans-Caspia and Russian Turkestan, who, if Russia made peace, might cross over into Persia and form the nucleus of a formidable army.

To complete the picture, the Russian Army in Persia had mutinied and announced its intention of returning home with all speed by the shortest route; but as the communications were notoriously bad, this was likely to take them some time. In these circumstances, it is pleasant to be able to record that a body of some 1,500 Cossacks fought side by side with our III Corps in the forthcoming operations. Stout fighters and hard-bitten fellows, they had resolved to throw in their lot with their commander, Colonel Bicharakoff; foregoing their right, as free citizens, to desert their Allies and return to their homes when it pleased them, they preferred to get on with the War until the enemy was beaten.

Secret Concentration

Four converging columns were engaged—the 35th, 37th, 38th, and 40th Brigade Groups, each with its own artillery and engineers. The Cavalry Division watched our left flank on the Adhaim, to prevent the enemy receiving reinforcements from the direction of Kirkuk. The concentration was carried out with the greatest secrecy, and the drive started after dark on the 2nd December. By midday on the 3rd the enemy had been manœuvred out of his first positions, leaving two guns and 150 prisoners in our hands.

The Turks now withdrew to an immensely strong position on the Sakaltutan Pass, where they had entrenched the crest of the ridge and constructed gun and machine-gun emplacements dominating successive defiles of the road. They might have hung on here for ever but for the fear of envelopment, yet again they were manœuvred out of their trenches. They withdrew after dark, and next morning our patrols found the position unoccupied.

"Standing on the Sakaltutan Pass we could see the whole Qara Tepe plain to the north, but there was no sign of the Turks. A helio flashing eighteen miles away to the north-east showed the position of our cavalry. Farther east, a long grey trail of dust marked the line of march of the 35th Brigade. An aeroplane reported that the enemy were holding a position in the hills north of Qara Tepe village. The Turks had blown up the bridge over the Narin River, and our progress for the rest of the day was slow, owing to the difficulties of bringing up ammunition and supplies."[1]

On the morning of the 5th, the two forces were once more in touch. Our

[1] Edmund Candler, *The Long Road to Baghdad.*

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cavalry found Qara Tepe village unoccupied, but shells came from the hills beyond. The 40th Brigade attacked on the right, the 35th Brigade on the left. By 3 p.m. we were on the crest of the ridge, with our guns shelling the retiring Turks.

For the most part the Turks did not fight well, but the 37th Dogras and 2/4th Gurkhas struck some stout fellows, who waited for the bayonet. Even so, the losses in the two battalions amounted to scarce 100. The casualties of the whole force engaged in the three days' fighting were little more than 200, a small price to pay for the complete success of our plans.

The Way to Persia Open

Next morning our airmen reported that the enemy was retreating along the Mosul road, after having set the Kifri coal-mines on fire. This was the third action that we had fought in the Jebel Hamrin, and the road to Persia was permanently opened at last.

On the way back our columns came in for a spell of unusually cold weather. The water froze in the men's water-bottles, and some who had lost their greatcoats were glad to wrap themselves at night in the leaded aeroplane signal sheets. In five months there had been a drop of 100 degrees between maximum and minimum temperatures. Mesopotamia kept some climatic surprises in store right up to the end.

It will make for clearness if we now turn to the Euphrates front, where in March active operations began once more. In the meantime dramatic events were taking place in Persia, where a British mission had been despatched under the command of General Dunsterville, but we will return to the adventures of "Dunsterforce," as it was officially called, later.

On the Tigris front, after the Battle of Tikrit, no move of any importance took place until the cold weather of 1918. The veteran 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions of the I Corps were ordered to Palestine to free two of General Allenby's British divisions for service in France, where the last German offensive was pending. Their place on the Tigris was taken by two new divisions, the 17th and 18th, now forming in Baghdad, and composed of British Territorial battalions and newly-raised Indian units hastily despatched from Bombay.

To return to the Euphrates: after Ramadi, the Turks on this front were reinforced—or perhaps replaced would be a more accurate expression, as General Brooking had made a clean sweep of the original force. They were holding the town of Hit; and since Subri Bey, their commander, had no mind to share the fate of his predecessor, they were extremely wary. Their outposts were well out to the front, and their main position followed the line of a nullah a couple of miles north of the town. The bulk of their troops were encamped at Sahiliya, another 10 miles to the north.

The Elusive Turk

In his dispatch dated April 15th, 1918, General Marshall wrote: "There would be no difficulty in capturing the town and driving the Turks out of their positions; but the capture of the Turkish force would be a matter of extreme difficulty, in consequence of their previous experience at Ramadi." He was right.

On February 19th, General Brooking advanced and gained touch with the Turkish outposts. The next few weeks were taken up in reconnaissance work, while stores and ammunition were being accumulated for the advance. But on the night of March 8th our patrols discovered that the Turks had gone, abandoning Hit and their position beyond. Subri Bey fell back without firing a shot, and never halted until he had

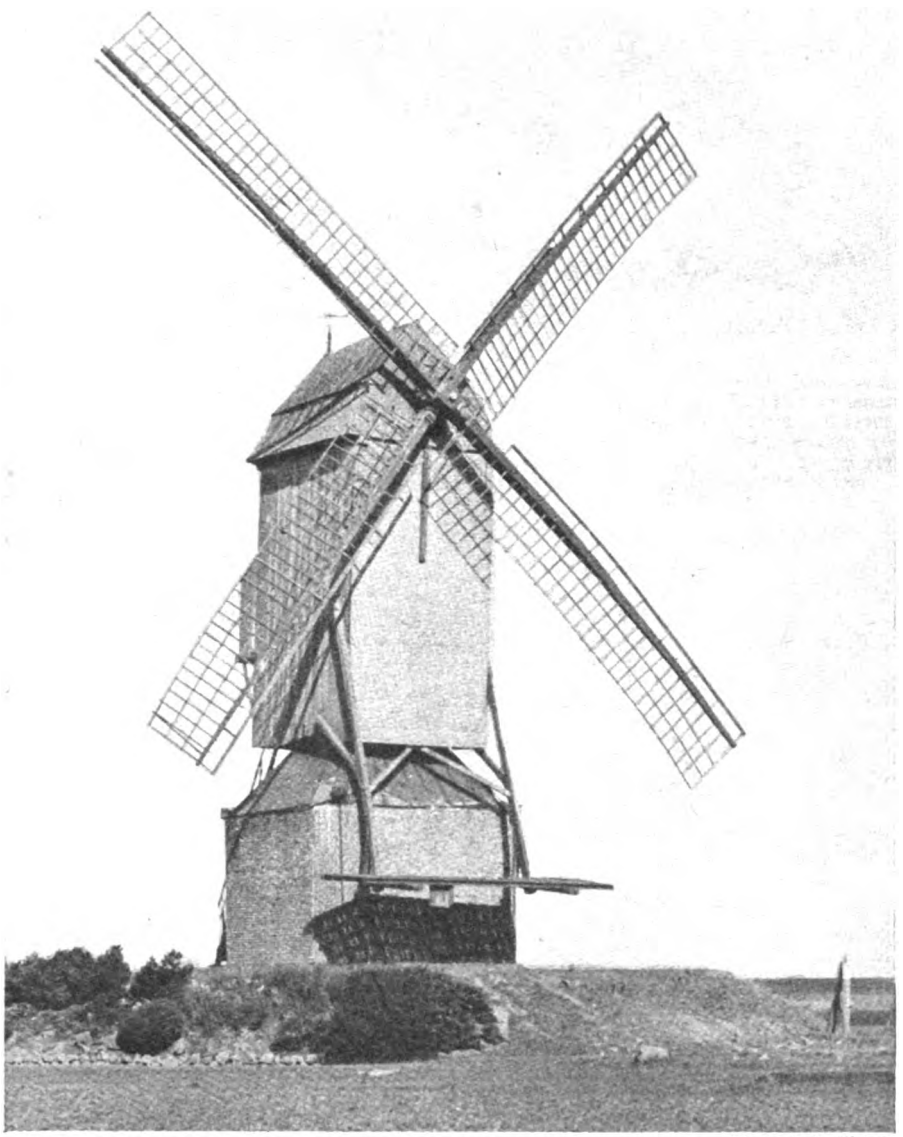

Photo: G. T. Watson.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

A little way east of Inverness Copse, on the north side of the Menin Road some 6 km. out of Ypres, a windmill used to stand just behind the German lines. In many instances the windmills destroyed during the War were not rebuilt, some more modern contrivance being substituted; but it happens that in this instance a new mill was constructed on the exact site of the old one. And here it is.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

PROPAGANDA

A specimen of British aerial propaganda distributed by balloon during the latter part of the War. On this subject, Winston Churchill writes in *The Great War*: "The German people are worthy of better explanations than the shallow tale that they were undermined by enemy propaganda. If the propaganda was effective, it was because it awoke an echo in German hearts, and stirred misgivings which from the beginning had dwelt there."

reached Khan Baghdadi, 25 miles to the north. Our aeroplanes bombed and machine-gunned his columns, making things generally uncomfortable for them.

Subri Bey's excess of caution certainly saved his force "to fight another day," but the Turkish Higher Command did not regard it in that light. He was promptly relieved of his command, and replaced by one Nazim Bey, who, it is reasonable to suppose, believed that he too would be superseded if he showed any undue readiness to quit. General Brooking heard the whole story of the change of command from Turkish deserters, and, in his estimate of the chances of success, set great hopes on the working of this factor in his opponent's mind. He was not disappointed.

The Turk had underestimated the length of our arm at Ramadi, but we had increased its range still further since then. General Brooking had at his disposal for the forthcoming operations the three infantry brigades of his 15th Division (12th, 42nd, and 50th Brigades), the newly-formed 11th Cavalry Brigade ("W" Battery R.H.A., 7th Hussars, 23rd Cavalry, and Guides Cavalry) under that redoubtable fighter General Cassells, and, most important of all, from the point of view of mobility, a dozen armoured cars and sufficient Ford vans to transport a couple of battalions, as well as to supply both them and the cavalry in a wide turning movement. He also had sufficient aeroplanes to meet all requirements.

Changes in the Scenery

The concentration was carried out in secret, the long columns marching by night and taking cover by day. The country over which these operations were about to take place was no longer the flat alluvial plain of the Lower Euphrates; north of Hit this gives place to a region of limestone and clay. The river runs considerably below the level of the surrounding country, which consists for the most part of a barren and undulating plateau, cut up by numerous steep and rocky ravines.

We had carried out as little as possible in the way of reconnaissance, for fear of giving away our intentions to the enemy; but it was known that the Turks had constructed two strong systems of trenches, marked on our maps as "P" trenches (the first line) and "Q" and "R" trenches (the main position).

General Brooking's plan was very much the same as that which had come off so well at Ramadi. He would pin the enemy to his trenches with the 50th Brigade, whilst the 42nd Brigade worked round his flank. Meanwhile Cassells' cavalry would make a wide sweep and come in on the Aleppo road, well in rear of the Turks, and there dig itself in. The net would then be drawn closer and closer, until the enemy must either break through or surrender. The 12th Brigade was in reserve, ready to be moved up in Ford vans to any part of the line.

On the night of November 25th, the force moved forward by a 14-mile bound; and by 2 a.m. the 50th Brigade was within striking-distance of "P" trenches. It was a bright moonlight night, and the Turks sent up flares and opened a heavy fire. This was satisfactory; our greatest fear had been that they would get wind of what was in store for them and slip away.

Everything now worked out according to plan. By 10 a.m. we were in possession of "P" trenches, and the infantry were re-forming to follow up the enemy to their next line.

Soon after noon Cassells sent back his staff captain to report that he had reached his position in rear of the enemy, and was digging in, "W" Battery having exchanged a few shells with the Turkish gunners on the way. He had found the track too bad for Ford vans, and would make shift to hold his own if the Turks tried to break through his line.

Capturing a Whole Battalion

At 5.30 p.m. the long line of Dorsets, Punjabis, Oxfords, and Jats moved slowly forward to the assault of "Q" and "R" trenches. Under cover of a terrific fire from the artillery and machine guns, they covered the 800 yards of open with trifling loss, and when darkness fell were established in the first line and still making progress. Our left was held up for some time by machine-gun fire from the flank, but the 6th Jats detached a company, which captured the guns at the point of the bayonet, and made prisoner a whole Turkish battalion. General Brooking ordered that the pressure on the enemy should be kept up throughout the night regardless of fatigue. There would be time for sleep when the battle was won.

Meanwhile, the 7th Hussars and 23rd and Guides Cavalry were digging in for dear life, and waiting for the attempt to break through. The Turks came on soon after midnight, and strove desperately for an hour to break the line. But the assault melted away before the rifle and machine-gun fire of the defenders. Finally, a white flag was put up in the moonlight, and a squadron of the 23rd Cavalry went out on foot to collect the prisoners. There were close on 1,000 of them.

With the first streak of dawn began the work of collecting the bag. All day the cavalry, armoured cars, and infantry in Ford vans were gathering in the

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prisoners. It was the most complete rout imaginable. When overtaken, the Turks threw up their hands or flung themselves flat on the ground. The cavalry spent the night in Fuhaima, 50 miles north of Khan Baghdadi. On the morning of the 28th we were in Ana, but still the pursuit did not stop; 30 miles further on, the armoured cars rescued Colonel Tennant, of the Flying Corps, and a British staff officer, who had been shot down in a 'plane over the Turkish lines the week before.

When the pursuit was finally called off, we had captured 5,254 Turks and 18 Germans, 12 guns, 47 machine guns, and large quantites of arms and stores—the whole of the Turkish 50th Division, together with its commander. Our total losses amounted to only 159.

A Brilliant Coup

The troops had shown amazing powers of endurance. The infantry marched and fought for 48 hours without rest or sleep; the cavalry covered 90 miles in two days, the armoured cars no less than 170 miles. General Brooking had brought off an even more brilliant coup than at Ramadi, and the effect on the enemy was still more crushing. There was ample evidence of the work that had been put in on the Euphrates for the German-Turkish counter-offensive on Baghdad. Falkenhayn's great scheme had been effectively checkmated.

Heavy rainstorms and gales prevailed throughout April, and caused considerable difficulty on our communications; but General Marshall decided that, as soon as the ground was dry enough, the III Corps under General Egerton[1] should take up the running. The great thing was to keep up the pressure on the enemy.

After their defeat in the Jebel Hamrin in December, Ali Ihsan and his *XIII Corps* had retired to the Kifri—Kirkuk area. This part of Kurdistan is rich agricultural country, and the Turks were able to support themselves comfortably on the local produce while continuing to cause trouble for us in Persia. General Marshall proposed to dislodge them.

It will be of interest to give some description of the terrain over which these operations took place, which is, again, entirely different from the Mesopotamian plain. It is a land of rolling downs, good crops, and excellent pasture, a good 1,000 feet above sea-level. There are some low ridges rising to 200 and 300 feet, and merging into the hills to the north, which were at the period in question covered in snow. Numerous streams flow through deep ravines, and in many places the valleys are swampy and practically impassable after rain. There are great stretches of clover, wild oats, and barley, and magnificent crops of corn, not yet ripe in April. Everywhere the ground at that season is covered with wild flowers, recalling an English spring.

[1] General Egerton will be remembered as the commander of the 14th Division. He took over the III Corps when General Marshall became C.-in-C. after the death of General Maude.

Pursuit of the *XIII Corps*

The operations opened on April 24th, and were entirely successful. In the course of three weeks' marching and fighting, we captured Kirkuk and drove the enemy out of the area and across the Little Zab River at Altun Köpri. The troops engaged on our side consisted of the 6th and 7th Cavalry Brigades, and the 37th, 38th, and 40th Infantry Brigades; but, owing to the nature of the country, these units were operating in a number of small columns carrying out an intricate series of wide turning movements—the tactics in which General Marshall excelled. The losses on our side were small, the Commander-in-Chief believing in using his men's legs to husband their lives, but we again took a heavy toll of the *XIII Corps*.

The first phase consisted in shepherding the Turks along the Kifri—Kirkuk road to a position at Tuz Khurmatli, where it was hoped that they would stand. On April 27th, General Holland-Pryor, with the 13th Hussars, the 21st and 22nd Cavalry, and two field batteries[1] came up with the Turks at the village of Kulawand, six miles short of the prepared position on which they were retiring at Tuz Khurmatli. There was no support within 20 miles, but General Holland-Pryor promptly extended his 10 squadrons in the form of a gigantic scythe, four yards between horse and horse, and charged, covered by the fire of his guns.

At the order "draw swords," the Turks could see a wide arc of light as the steel flashed in the sun. It must have been an uncomfortable moment. Our horsemen trotted the first 1,500 yards, and then, increasing the pace gradually to a gallop, went into the enemy. The Turks showed some of their old spirit. Many of them left their trenches and ran out to man a dry watercourse, whence they opened a rapid fire. But their nerve was less steady than of old, and they aimed high. They were ridden over, and literally cut to pieces, only a few escaping to the hills nearby.

[1] B/66 R.F.A. and 61st Battery R.F.A. The guns were drawn by 8-horse, instead of the normal 6-horse, teams, to enable them to keep up with the cavalry.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

"INGRATITUDE"

Another example of air-post propaganda, which speaks for itself. The German wording which appeared below the original of the picture on page 1408 may be translated: *Hindenburg*—"Majesty, the nation is oppressed and grumbles incessantly." *Kaiser*—"Why do they grumble? We feel no burden."

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A Heavy Slaughter

An Indian officer of the 21st Cavalry rode at a Turkish officer, who was in the act of throwing a bomb, and took his head clean off his shoulders with one stroke. No fewer than 200 Turks were killed with the sword, including two battalion commanders; and close on 600 prisoners were taken, together with a mountain gun.

On the 29th we mounted a full-dress attack, which was completely successful, on the Tuz Khurmatli position. The cavalry got its chance once more in the pursuit, charging many scattered bodies of Turks and taking a number of prisoners. Two troops of the 13th Hussars, under Second-Lieutenant Macdonald, came under machine-gun fire from a knoll. Macdonald promptly wheeled his men to the right, out of the line of fire, and charged a distance of 500 yards, coming in behind the Turks and capturing five machine guns and 40 men. We buried 200 Turkish dead on their abandoned position, and captured 1,300 prisoners and 12 guns. Our total casualties did not exceed 200.

After this there was no serious fighting. Heavy rain rendered movement as difficult for the pursued as for their pursuers. We were often reduced to half-rations, yet the Tommy insisted on sharing what he had with the inhabitants, many of whom were starving. On the 7th May we entered Kirkuk, where the Turks had abandoned their wounded. Their last act before leaving the town was to blow up the Christian church, a venerable building dating from the 4th century. By nightfall on the 11th we had hustled the Turkish rearguard over the Little Zab.

Leaving the troops in Mesopotamia to settle down for the hot weather with a pleasant sense of having done some good work during the campaigning season, we must now turn to events in Persia. Before the end of 1917 there began to collect in Baghdad a body of several hundred officers and N.C.O.'s, drawn from all the fronts. The majority of them were Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans: all were men who had distinguished themselves in the field, and they were about as tough a crowd as could be got together.

They could not be induced to divulge the reason for their coming; indeed, all they knew was that they had volunteered for a secret and dangerous mission. They were generally known as the "Hush-hush" Force, and their probable destination formed the subject of a fine and fruity crop of rumours.

Introducing "Dunsterforce"

Actually, they constituted the nucleus of what was officially known as "Dunsterforce," a military mission under the command of General Dunsterville (the original of Kipling's "Stalky"), which was dispatched into Persia in January, 1918, with the object of countering German and Turkish plans in Central Asia. It is impossible here to go into the details of post-Revolution politics in the Russian borderlands. The minds of all concerned were full of wild-cat schemes to form empires and independent republics of every political hue from white to red. Our sole object was to carry on the war against Germans and Turks, and to prevent them from extending their influence and stirring up trouble for us in this inflammable part of the world.

The best way of effecting our object seemed to be to give what help we could

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BRITISH TROOPS ENTERING KIRKUK

Kirkuk is situated just under 160 miles due north of Baghdad, just over 100 miles south-east of Mosul, and a mere 20 miles south of the Little Zab river, a tributary of the Tigris. It was entered by General Marshall's forces on May 7th, 1918. The largest town between Baghdad and Mosul, it had previously formed the headquarters of the Turkish forces on this front. The British found many stores lying abandoned, and several hundred Armenians were discovered. A number of these offered to enlist.

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to the various local peoples who were putting up a fight against the common enemy. The Armenians, in particular, were holding up a Turkish push toward the Caspian Sea at Baku, and had besought our help. The first objective of "Stalky" and his band was Enzeli, on the southern shore of the inland sea, whence they would be transported by ship to Baku, the base of the Armenian Army; thence they would go on to Tiflis, in Georgia, where the local inhabitants were also in need of military assistance in their fight against the enemy.

This was a sufficiently ambitious project: Enzeli is 400 miles from Baghdad as the crow flies, and a good deal farther by road; Baku is a further 200 miles by sea; Tiflis yet another 300 miles by road and rail. But, in addition to this by no means trifling task, "Dunsterforce" was also to enlist and train any trustworthy elements—disbanded Russians and untrained Persians—in North Persia, and to weld them into some kind of a fighting-force. To assist them in their task, they took with them Bicharakoff and his Cossacks, who, it will be remembered, had thrown in their lot with us after the dissolution of their army.

The Only Time They Laughed

By the middle of February, "Stalky" had reached Enzeli, after surmounting every sort of difficulty caused by snow, bad roads, and opposition both open and covert. He had with him an armoured car and some 20 men, with a dozen Ford vans and one Lewis gun. He found a Revolutionary Committee in charge, consisting of a clerk, a sailor, and an ex-trumpeter, who were unanimous in refusing to allow the party to proceed. These were humourless souls and violently mistrustful of British intentions. The General relates in his book [1] that the only time he ever heard this, or any other Revolutionary Committee, laugh, was when he assured them that Great Britain had no desire to annex any territory in this part of the world.

In consequence he turned back to Hamadan, through country where a German officer in uniform was endeavouring to organise a body of several thousand of the local bandits to fight the British. After a visit to Baghdad to explain his difficulties, he was eventually reinforced by a brigade from the 13th Division, and some troops were sent to keep open his communications.

It was not until June that he was in a position to move forward from Hamadan once more, and, in the meantime, considerable progress had been made with the second part of the scheme, the raising of local levies. After a sharp engagement with the German-trained bandits of the neighbourhood, in which the 1/4th Hants and a squadron of the 14th Hussars distinguished themselves, Dunsterville found himself once more on the Caspian.

After an interminable deal of talking with the Revolutionary Committee, he managed to charter three ships to convey the 39th Infantry Brigade to Baku. He took up his own quarters on the largest of these vessels, which bore the name *President Kruger*. The only ornament in the saloon was a life-size portrait of Oom Paul, complete with beard and the inevitable top-hat; and some

1 Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce.*

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTER THE CAPTURE

The British forces at Kirkuk were withdrawn again on June 1st, 1918, and the town was not recaptured until the evening of October 25th, when only slight resistance was encountered. The above photograph shows starving Turkish soldiers found by our troops after their entry. Kirkuk, though set in so historic a country, is not of great interest. There is a mosque said to contain the tomb of Daniel, but the ancient Christian church, which the Turks had used as a munition-dump, was blown up by them in May, 1918.

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South African officers got quite a shock on finding themselves, here in Central Asia, suddenly face-to-face with the familiar features.

A Delicate Question

The ships, in true revolutionary style, were all run by Committees of Sailors, and flew the Red Flag. "Stalky" objected to sailing under this banner, and was promptly accused by the Committee of being "counter-revolutionary." He asserted that he was neither counter-revolutionary nor revolutionary, but just a plain soldier trying to do his job; and that in any case he objected to the Red Flag, and proposed to fly the Russian ensign. This aroused further objections, but honour was finally satisfied by flying the Russian flag upside-down—thus turning it into the official flag of Serbia.

"The lightning sears the night landscape on the eyeball. Here is a flash in the blackness through which we were stumbling.

"A British general on the Caspian, the only sea unploughed before by British keels, on board a ship named after a South African Dutch President and former enemy, sailing from a Persian port, under the Serbian flag, to relieve from the Turks a body of Armenians in a revolutionary Russian town." [1]

Outside the pages of *Alice in Wonderland* this record must take some beating.

By the middle of July Dunsterville was established in Baku with the 39th Brigade, the 8th Battery R.F.A., two aeroplanes, and some armoured cars belonging to Commander Locker Lampson's unit. The Turks were attacking the town in force, and the remaining defenders consisted of some 10,000 Armenians and Russian volunteers of very little military value. The interminable talking and wrangling of the Revolutionary Committees made effective co-operation difficult; and Bicharakoff and his men, who might have been of some use, were operating 200 miles to the north.

On August 26th a determined Turkish attack was beaten off by the North Staffords and Worcesters, who lost heavily, and had to give ground through being unsupported by the local troops. Fighting continued for the next few days, the brunt of which was borne by the British; and it became evident that at this rate it was merely a matter of time before the town must fall. Three weak British battalions, mustering in all fewer than 1,000 men, could not be expected to hold up indefinitely the continued assaults of many times that number of Turks.

[1] Dunsterville, *op. cit.*

Disconcerting Scruples

The local levies were quite unreliable. In the course of one action a British officer asked the commander of an Armenian battalion to move up and occupy a ridge that commanded his flank. The reply was, "Oh, I couldn't do that. The Turks are going there." [1] There was little to be hoped for from such people, and precautionary measures were taken to evacuate the force in case of emergency.

Fortunately a lull in the fighting enabled us to make the necessary preparations, but, on September 14th, the Turks once more attacked in force. There ensued 16 hours of continuous fighting, the brunt of which was again borne by the devoted 39th Brigade.

That night our troops withdrew to the harbour and embarked; and when morning broke they were well on their way back to Enzeli. The withdrawal and embarkation in face of the enemy was a ticklish affair. The Revolutionary Committee was furious at what it called this "desertion," and tried to prevent our departure by force: the checkmating of its designs is in itself a long, tragi-comic story. In fairness to "Stalky," it should be explained that he had given his difficult allies early warning of his intention to withdraw, and had kept them informed of his plans.

"The final scene in this drama was the arrival of a deputation from the revolutionary sailors of one of our ships, the *Kursk* (after the expedition got back to Enzeli), who presented a written petition to me in the following terms:

"'We, the Committee and crew of the s.s. *Kursk*, have witnessed with intense admiration the heroic conduct of your brave British soldiers in the defence of Baku. We have seen them suffering wounds and death bravely in defence of our town, which our own people were too feeble to defend. It is wonderful to us that these fine fellows from that distant island in the North Sea should have come all this way to the Caspian and have given up their lives there in the cause of honour and glory.

"'We are so much impressed by their bearing and valour and by the whole episode of the British endeavours to save Baku from the Turks, that we wish to be taken over at once in a body and granted British nationality.'" [2]

This was not a bad tribute from revolutionary Russian sailors to a brigade of Kitchener's Army.

[1] Dunsterville, *op. cit.*
[2] *Ibid.*

"Dunsterforce" Withdraws

Baku fell to the Turks, and was not reoccupied by us until after the Armistice. This was therefore the end of the adventures of Dunsterforce, and its place in Persia was taken by the 14th Division, sent up from Baghdad, which henceforth formed the nucleus of what came to be known as "Norperforce." But it was "Stalky" and his gallant band who had laid the foundations.

Throughout the summer of 1918 there was no movement in Mesopotamia on either the British or Turkish side. Our infantry brigades were reduced from four battalions to three, and the 12 battalions thus combed out were dispatched to Salonica—another theatre of war that our opponents labelled, rather unwisely, as it turned out for them, an Allied "internment camp." On the Turkish side, Halil, Townshend's captor, who had been in command in Mesopotamia since Ctesiphon, had gone to the Caucasus, and his place was taken by that cool hand and stout fighter, Ali Ihsan.

On September 25th, Bulgaria asked for an armistice. Turkey meanwhile was reeling from the blow dealt her by Allenby in Palestine, and the British Government called for another effort in Mesopotamia to complete her discomfiture. General Marshall decided to strike up the Tigris at Mosul.

The enemy was known to be holding in force a strong position astride the Fat-ha Gorge, where the Tigris cleaves its way through the Jebel Hamrin hills. There was also a second position on both banks some 15 miles farther back, where the Little Zab River runs into the Tigris at Humr. The Turks had been preparing these lines covering Mosul for the past 18 months.

General Cobbe's scheme was an ambitious one. As soon as the necessary advanced supply and ammunition depots had been formed, and the troops concentrated, the 18th Division (53rd, 54th, and 55th Brigades) was to attack the Fat-ha position on the eastern bank, whilst the 7th Cavalry Brigade was to cross the Jebel Hamrin by a pass farther to the east and block the enemy's line of retreat.

Immediately the 18th Division had done its work, the 17th Division (34th, 51st, and 52nd Brigades) would attack the main Fat-ha position on the west bank. Then, with both portions of that position in our hands, the two divisions would advance and attack the next position at Humr and the Little Zab.

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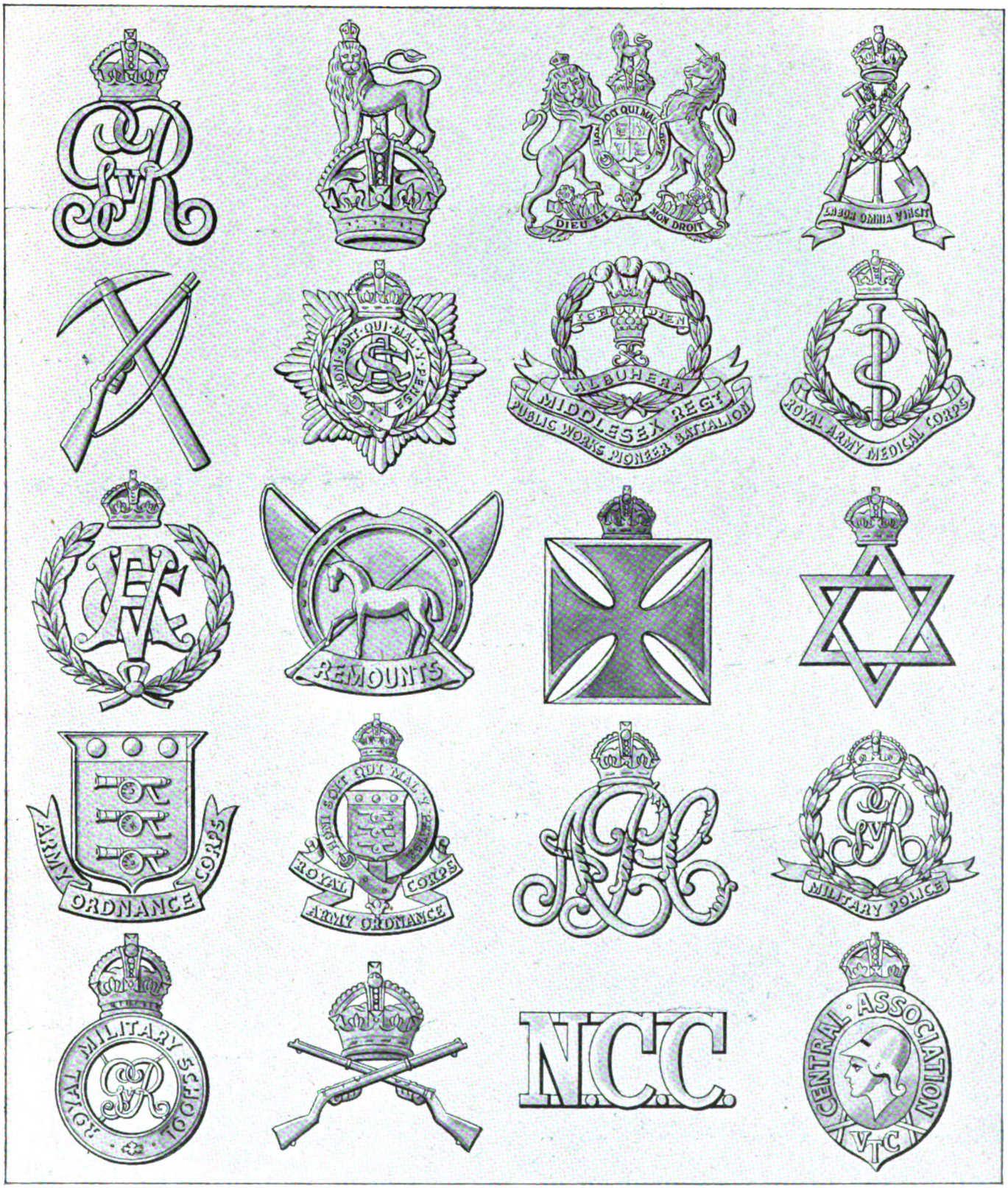

Specially drawn.

BADGES—THIRTEENTH SELECTION

From left to right, starting with the top row, the badges shown are those of the following: 1—Royal Defence Corps. 2—Staff Officers. 3—General Service. 4—Labour Corps. 5—Pioneer Battalion. 6—Royal Army Service Corps. 7—Public Works Pioneer Battalion. 8—Royal Army Medical Corps. 9—Army Veterinary Corps. 10—Army Remounts Dept. 11—Army Chaplains Dept. 12—Jewish Chaplain. 13—Army Ordnance Dept. 14—Royal Army Ordnance Corps. 15—Army Pay Corps. 16—Corps of Military Police. 17—Royal Military School. 18—School of Musketry. 19—Non-combatant Corps. 20—Volunteer Training Corps.

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An Ambitious Plan

Meanwhile, the 11th Cavalry Brigade and the armoured cars, under General Cassells, were to cross the Jebel Hamrin by another pass, and, making a wide sweep to the east, to traverse the Little Zab by a ford 25 miles upstream from its junction with the Tigris, in order to co-operate in the attack on the Humr position.

It was also intimated to Cassells that, if all went well, he might be required to make another wide sweep out into the desert, and, crossing the Tigris north of Sharqat, to establish himself astride the enemy's line of retreat as he had done before at Khan Baghdadi.

Two weak divisions of the Turkish *XIII Corps* lay around Kirkuk, some 50 miles to the east, and the 40th Brigade was sent to watch them and prevent their joining up during the battle with the *XVIII Corps* on the Tigris.

By nightfall on the 23rd the troops were in their places, and at dawn they advanced to the assault. To their disgust, they found that the Turks had slipped away in the night on both banks and retired to their main position. Worse still, they had demolished portions of the road on the hilly west bank, thus making pursuit difficult.

When the infantry came up with the Turks again, it was found that they were holding their main position on the west bank in strength. Two companies of the H.L.I., the leading battalion of the advance guard, carried an outlying redoubt with a dashing charge, but suffered severe casualties.

On the east bank, the Turks had retired, and the 18th Division pushed on over the Little Zab to assist their comrades on the other bank with their fire. This time the Turks did not slip away in the night; and when the 17th Division attacked on the 26th, they were held up all along the line.

Leaving the infantry locked in battle at Humr, we must now turn to see what was happening elsewhere. The 40th Brigade was engaged with the *XIII Corps* round Kirkuk, but did not succeed in holding up all of it, so that parts of the *5th Division* slipped away toward the Tigris.

Action on the Little Zab

Now let us turn to Cassells' Brigade. It crossed the Jebel Hamrin at 2 a.m. on the 24th, taking with it three days' rations. The General rode with the advance guard, which consisted of the 7th Hussars and a section of "W" R.H.A. They had covered the 50-odd miles to Zarariya on the Little Zab by 3 p.m., only to find the ford held by superior numbers of the enemy, who proved to consist of a battalion and four

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DEATH VISITS THE DEAD

Death paid a visit to his own when he called at this cemetery, crushing all and sundry beneath his iron heel. The scene of havoc is near Gavrelle, and the photograph was taken on October 5th, 1918. The village had been evacuated by the Germans and occupied by the 51st Division on August 27th, and taken over by the 8th Division immediately afterwards.

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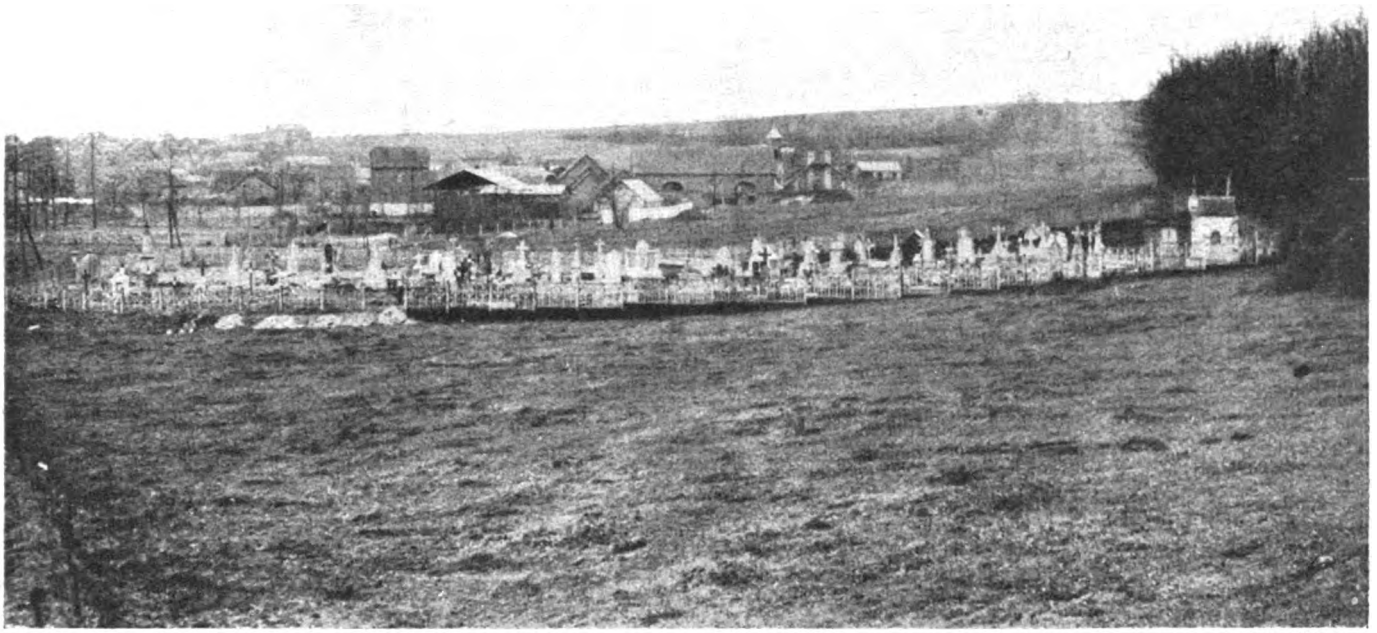

Photo: Keystone.

THE DEAD IN PEACE AGAIN

Gavrelle was heavily involved in the later stages of the Battle of Arras, April, 1917. It was captured on April 23rd, and on the 24th heavy losses were inflicted on the Germans just east of it. An enemy counter-attack was repulsed on the 26th. Eleven months later, when our line still ran just east of the village, Gavrelle was garrisoned by the 169th Brigade, 56th Division. The result of the battle of March 28th was to secure the place once again for the Germans.

guns that had slipped away from in front of Lewin and the 40th Brigade near Kirkuk.

Realising that the Turks were probably as much surprised as he was, Cassells decided to attack. After a brilliant little action, in which the Hussars turned the enemy's flank by another ford farther downstream, he succeeded in driving the enemy off. When the main body of the brigade arrived, a few hours later, a bridgehead had already been established.

Next morning the 7th Cavalry Brigade came up on Cassells' left, and there was some desultory fighting with small parties of the enemy. That night the General received the hoped-for order to push on to Sharqat. Starting at dawn on the morning of the 26th, his advance guard reached the Tigris near Hadraniya before 1 p.m.

After some searching, a ford was found, and Cassells crossed with the Guides Cavalry, one troop of the regiment having already swum across. "On the far bank was a Turkish hospital, and one of the doctors, a Greek, offered to show the General a good defensive position. He was given a horse, and they galloped the three miles to the ridge in question. The British General agreed with the Greek doctor, who must have been a happy, if a sore, man for this hour of glorious life." [1]

As the squadrons crossed, they galloped straight on to the position. Last came a section of "W" Battery, which contrived to get over in the dark with the water over the tops of its gun-shields (there was a good four feet of water running at the ford). Next morning the remainder of the brigade crossed, together with the armoured cars, which had rejoined after cutting the telegraph-wires farther north. Having marched 83 miles in two days, the cavalry now set about digging themselves in.

Gathering Peril

What they did not yet know was that, owing to supply difficulties and the lack of progress of the 17th Division, Cobbe had decided to withdraw the 7th Cavalry Brigade to Fat-ha on the night of the 26th. Cassells' men were thus completely in the blue. They were also unaware that the *5th Division* was bearing down on their flank, and that the main body of the *XVIII Corps* had evacuated the Humr position during the night and was retiring straight towards them.

However, it was soon evident that their situation might become dangerous, for they were suddenly attacked from north and south simultaneously. Sending a squadron of the 7th Hussars to hold off the force approaching from the north, Cassells boldly launched the 23rd Cavalry against his southern assailants. The Turks were led by these resolute tactics to believe that the force opposed to them was considerably larger than it was. Having done their job, the 23rd Cavalry were called off, and the whole brigade got down once more to its digging.

Meanwhile, General Cobbe had realised the danger to Cassells' small force, and had ordered the 7th Cavalry Brigade and the 53rd Infantry Brigade to march at once to his assistance, taking an ample

[1] From the account of an officer of the Guides Cavalry, published in *The Cavalry Journal* and quoted by Burne in *Mesopotamia: the Last Phase.*

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DOING ALL THEY COULD

Some of the "wanton" (*vide* Press) destruction caused by the enemy during his last great retreat: a wrecked railway bridge over the road from Wavrechain to Prouvy. Since the Germans had neither the heart nor the time to do a great deal in the way of fighting, this obstruction of every channel likely to be of service to their pursuers was the best policy left to them for their own salvation. The photograph is dated November 4th, 1918.

supply of 18-pounder shrapnel, of which Cassells was running short. (The Horse Artillery Batteries had now discarded their 13-pounders, which threw a shell like a pop-gun, and were armed with 18-pounders drawn by 8-horse teams.) The 17th Division was following up slowly on the west bank.

It was an open question whether succour could reach Cassells in time. After spending an anxious night, he was relieved, when dawn broke on the 28th, to see the 53rd Infantry Brigade on the other bank of the Tigris; it had marched 33 miles in 21 hours. A ferry had already been established, and the 1/7th Gurkhas at once started crossing, though it would take some hours before all of them were over.

Shortly after this, a considerable number of guns opened fire, and hostile infantry began to advance. Two squadrons of the 7th Hussars drove home a resolute counter-attack, penetrating to within a short distance of the enemy guns and finally withdrawing with a loss of 70 men.

A Desperate Battle

By noon the enemy was coming on again from both directions, and there began an epic fight which lasted well into the night. Cassells' 1,000 rifles (this is all a cavalry brigade can put into the firing-line after leaving behind the horse-holders) were soon extended in a huge arc, with "W's" guns in the centre. The fight raged hottest round the battery. Throughout the day the General continued to breathe forth a breezy optimism, putting heart into the troops wherever he went. By 2.30 in the afternoon, it was estimated that the Turks had 3,000 men in front and as many more behind our line. They had worked their way to within 300 yards of the 7th Hussars, who were asking for help.

As if in answer to their call, the leading company of Gurkhas now arrived on the scene, closely followed by the remainder of the regiment. They relieved the Guides Cavalry, who went to the support of the Hussars. At 5 p.m. a further welcome reinforcement arrived, in the shape of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, which had marched 50 miles since 1 a.m. It at once crossed and relieved "C" Squadron of the 7th Hussars, which had been pushed back almost to the ford. All that night the infantry were crossing, and, though heavy fighting still continued, the position was now reasonably secure.

Meanwhile, the 17th Division had been advancing all day; but its progress was slow, owing to the difficult ground, and not until 1.30 p.m. did it gain touch with the Turks. As soon as

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an attack could be organised, the West Kents went in and drove the enemy from their trenches with a dashing assault. But the troops were much exhausted, and after this progress was slow. Nevertheless, General Cobbe, realising that this was the crisis of the battle, insisted that the infantry should press on through the night. There would be time enough for rest when the enemy was beaten.

When dawn broke on the 29th, after a night of continuous fighting, General Cassells saw a large force about three miles to the south, but could not make out at first whether it consisted of our men or of Turks. At the same time the enemy to the north were seen to have pushed forward, and were now occupying a steep bluff overlooking the vital ford, and only 3,000 yards from it. They brought up some guns and started shelling "V" Battery, who were crossing.

Expedition to Capture the Bluff

General Norton, commanding the 7th Cavalry Brigade, saw that the bluff must be captured at once, and ordered the 13th Hussars, supported by "V" and the brigade machine guns, to gallop to the foot of the bluff and then attack dismounted. The regiment advanced from the ford in diamond formation, and set out on its two-mile ride across the open under a heavy fire from the Turkish guns.

When it was about half-way, a shell knocked out the leading files, together with the squadron commander who was giving the direction. In the smoke and confusion the regiment swerved to its left, and reached the cover of a small hill, wide of its objective.

A halt was called to reorganise the attack, and another battery came up in support. Soon after 1 p.m. the Hussars once more issued from behind their cover, burning to wipe out their earlier mistake. "The regiment swept out from under Cemetery Hill (the cheerful name of the mound behind which they had spent the morning) in two lines, the C.O. this time in the lead himself. Onlookers were astonished at the precision of the lines: it might have been a charge across the Long Valley.

"Straight for the bluff the regiment galloped, greeted as before by heavy fire. Suddenly the charge was checked by an unexpected ravine, but presently the Colonel could be seen threading his way across it, closely followed by the remainder, and the movement was continued without a single casualty right up to the foot of the bluff, which was dead ground.

"Here the men dismounted, fixed bayonets, and, still led by their colonel, rapidly climbed the steep face of the bluff, about 150 feet in height. Colonel Richardson was the first to reach the top. The Turks were already beginning to

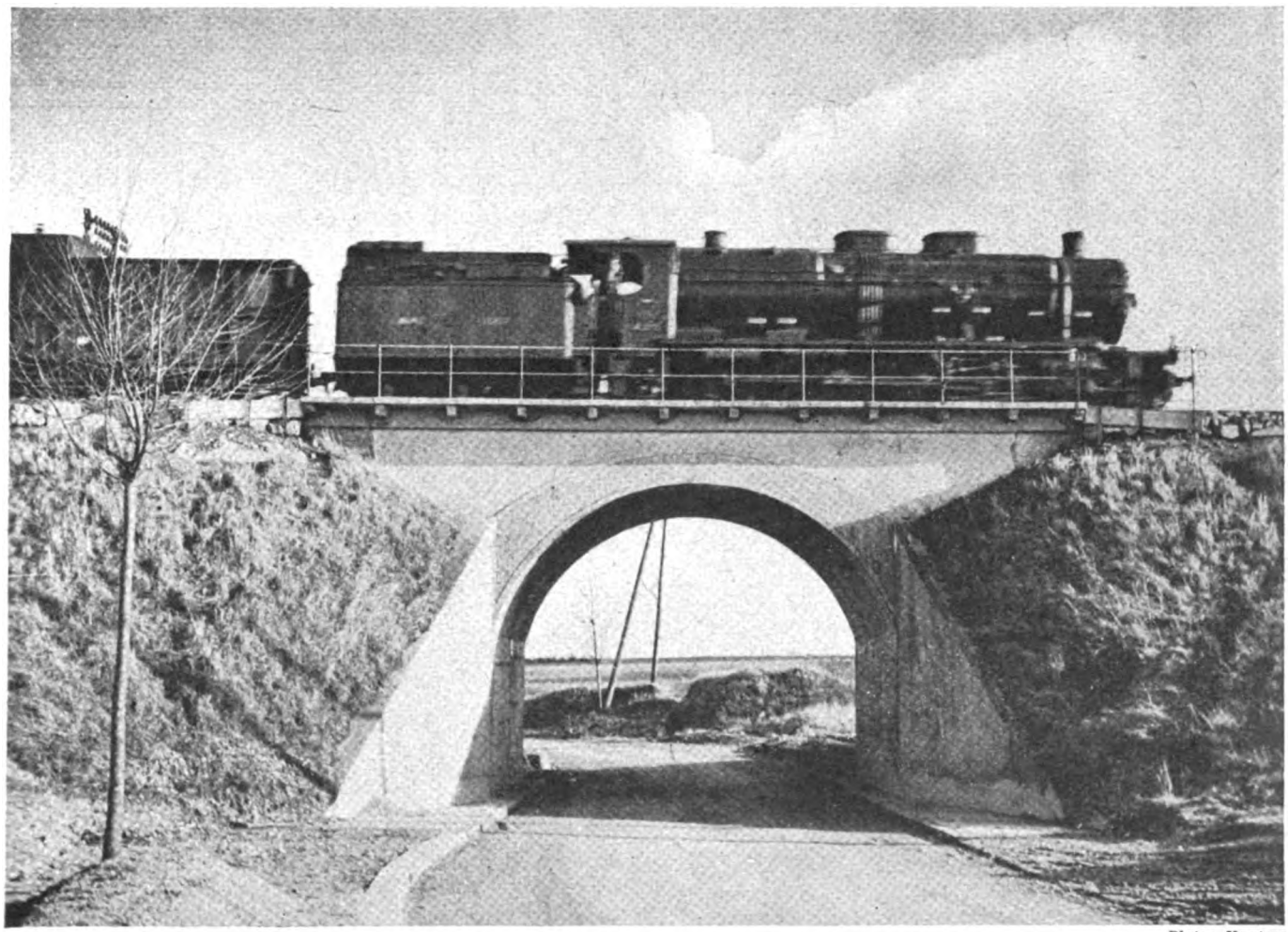

Photo: Keystone.

CHUFFING MERRILY

So entirely free from chasms is this railway nowadays, that the engine-driver can remove his attention from the track long enough to watch our photographer taking his portrait. The line is one of those linking Denain with Valenciennes; Prouvy is a village on the Scheldt 5 km. east-south-east of Denain, and Wavrechain, once distinct, is now a suburb of the town. British forces entered Denain on October 19th, 1918.

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take to their heels, thoroughly shaken by the admirable barrage, which lifted at the last moment and allowed the regiment to go in with the bayonet and finish off the defenders.

"A sharp hand-to-hand fight ensued, the upshot of which was that the whole of the occupants surrendered, 730 in all. A squadron of the 14th Lancers, which had been waiting for the moment, galloped after the fugitives and captured 260 of them, thus practically accounting for the whole force."[1]

This dashing affair removed the danger from the north. Cassells had now ample troops for his purpose, and set about enlarging and strengthening the net against the moment when the 17th Division would drive the enemy into it.

[1] Burne, *Mesopotamia: the Last Phase.*

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

GENERAL MARSHALL

Lieut.-General Sir W. R. Marshall, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., as he ultimately became, succeeded Sir Stanley Maude as General Officer Commanding in Chief, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, in November, 1917. He had already distinguished himself in the Gallipoli campaign, where at various times he commanded the 29th, 42nd, and 53rd Divisions. In Mesopotamia he proved a worthy successor to General Maude, and there is no knowing how far on the road to Constantinople his troops might not have progressed but for the cessation of hostilities.

Tough Time for the Infantry

Meanwhile, our infantry were having a hard time. The roads had been destroyed by the retreating enemy, and the country was broken and rocky. The men were dead beat, and progress was slow. It was not until midday that the advance guard was once more in touch with the enemy. Confused fighting followed, the battalions being thrown in as they came up. The 45th Sikhs and 114th Mahrattas succeeded in getting into the Turkish trenches, only to be driven out again by a counter-attack. A dust-storm made artillery co-operation difficult. As night fell, our line was reorganised and preparations made for another assault at dawn.

When dawn broke on the 30th, General Cobbe ordered Cassells and the 17th Division to advance simultaneously and thus draw tight the net surrounding the enemy. But when our men came in sight, they were greeted with the white flag. The Turk had shot his bolt, and the battle was over.

The cavalry now assumed the task of rounding up the fugitives. The pursuit was continued to within 12 miles of the walls of Mosul. Here and there a party of Turks would stand at bay, and many times during the day our horsemen got in with the sabre. It was not until the following morning that we learnt that an armistice had been signed on October 30th. The war with Turkey was ended.

A shrewd critic has described this, the last fight of the I Corps, as "a success that deserved immortality."[1] Between the 18th and 30th October, we had captured 11,322 prisoners, 51 guns, and 130 machine guns; and the force opposed to us had ceased to exist. Our casualties in the same period amounted to 1,886. The honours of the battle unquestionably lay with Cassells and his men, and theirs was a performance of which the British cavalry and horse artillery and their Indian comrades may be proud for all time.

The last phase in Mesopotamia, as in Palestine, brought out the full possibilities of mobile troops. But for the bold handling of the cavalry, neither of our final victories over the Turks would have been as complete as they were. Theirs had not been an easy task. In a theatre of war like Mesopotamia, where a fixed front with two trench-lines facing one another was the exception rather than the rule, practically the whole work of patrolling and outpost-fighting fell on

[1] Arnold Wilson, *A Clash of Loyalties.*

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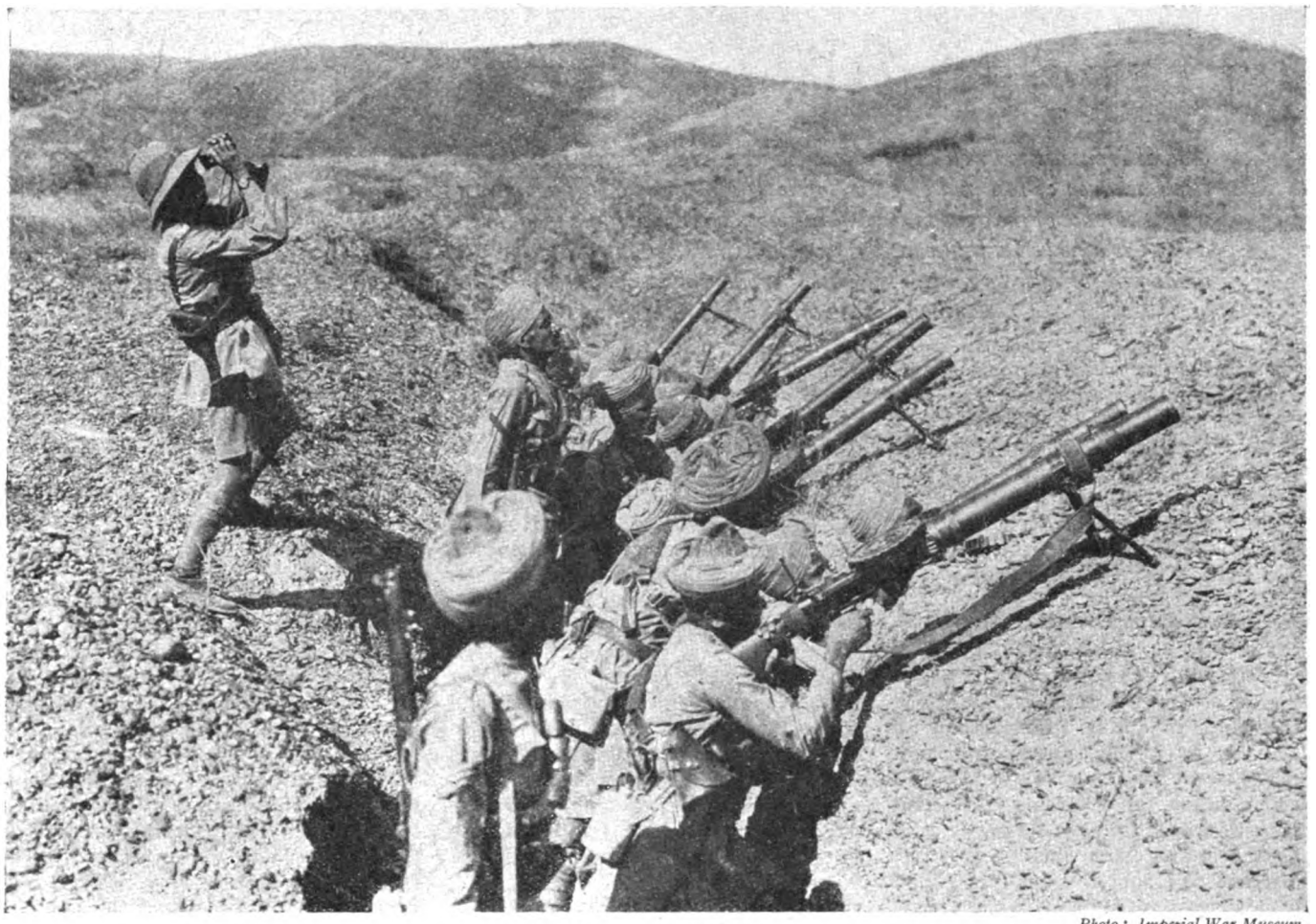

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

SEARCHING THE SKIES

Not manna, but foemen, are being awaited from heaven by this little company of Lewis gunners amid the barren Mesopotamian hills. The guns are to put up a barrage as soon as an enemy aeroplane comes into view. The British superiority in aircraft—and it was a superiority in quality, even more than in quantity—became of greater and greater value as the two eastern campaigns went on.

them. In the early days, too, they often had to fight to obtain information as to the enemy's whereabouts and dispositions.

Compared with those of the infantry, their casualties were light—a few men and horses here and there. But they were always on duty, and it is one thing to be hit in battle, and quite another to be knocked out on patrol. For a casualty on patrol there is always a strong possibility of being left behind to the tender mercies of the Arabs, while the best hope is that of being brought in for miles hanging over the front of your pal's saddle.

The proper use of cavalry took a great deal of learning. It was essentially a matter of quickness of judgment, of intuitive knowledge of when a risk could be taken and when not. Mounted men present an enormous target to machine guns, and when dismounted they are weak in fire-power, owing to the necessity for leaving horse-holders. Led horses, too, are very vulnerable; and in a barren country watering is an ever-present problem.

We were fortunate, in the end, in throwing up a born cavalry leader such as Cassells. Whether he would have found the same scope in the earlier stages, when the Turks were more disposed to fight to a finish and less apt to look over their shoulders to see whether their line of retreat was open, is a matter for argument. On the whole, one is inclined to think that he would. There were several occasions in the earlier years when properly-used cavalry could have exercised a decisive effect.

One such was when Maude had broken the Turkish front before Kut and crossed the Tigris at Shumran in the enemy's rear. If Cassels had been in command of the Cavalry Division then, the main body of the Turks might have been rounded up before they reached Baghdad.

As it Might have Been . . .

The end was sudden and dramatic. Had General Marshall delayed his stroke a week, we now know that the road to Mosul, to Aleppo—to Constantinople, for that matter—would have laid open to him; he could have gained his farthest objectives without firing a shot or incurring a casualty. Sitting in our arm-chairs to-day, Twenty Years After, we may reflect on the waste of it.

But the men who fought with Cobbe and Cassells did not think of futility on that morning in October, when the last remnants of the broken Ottoman Army laid down their arms by the Tigris at Sharqat. They would not have had it otherwise; a tamer finish would have been incompatible with their gallant fighting spirit, and with that of more than 30,000 of their comrades who had laid down their lives in the long four years of struggle in the Land of the Two Rivers.

These men of simple faith counted their lives well spent in the cause for which they fought. One day, in our hour of need, their example will shine forth as an inspiration to those who come after.

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CHAPTER LXXXV

TALBOT HOUSE—THEN AND NOW

Talbot House is too well known to stand in need of lengthy introduction here. Not only was the House itself a haven of rest and of peace to many a member of the Empire's forces, but the seed planted there, within earshot of the guns in the Salient, has grown and flourished throughout the years between. To-day Toc H is a powerful influence for good, and in this chapter the Rev. P. T. B. ("Tubby") Clayton, whose name will for ever be associated with the movement, tells of those years in Poperinghe, during which the foundations of a great brotherhood were well and truly laid.

WITHIN what was the Ypres Salient are to be found 132 Gardens of Peace. Each holds some graves, where men who loved Toc H rest for awhile. When Toc H at home sends out its weekly pilgrimages to the Old House and the surrounding Salient, the most impressive sight is Tyne Cot Cemetery.

A Cathedral Greater than St. Paul's

Here, with 12,000 graves and 35,000 "missing" on the walls, is an immense cathedral, in outline greater than St. Paul's: its paving, grass; its art is flowering trees; its dome, the sky; its congregation, men from the whole Empire, with a few German graves hard by the altar-stone. The slender Cross of Sacrifice stands, by our late King's own suggestion, upon the ruins of a great concrete fort finally won by the Australian infantry, hundreds of whom rest near at hand.

But even more significant to those who knew is the untold connection between the pill-box lower down the slope, upon the north site of the paradise, and the inconspicuous stone which marks the grave of Captain C. S. Jefferies, V.C., 30th Battalion, A.I.F., with the date "12th October, 1917," and his age 23. He takes his place, no more than that, among his silent comrades; but it was he, according to the record, who, seeing this "pill-box" was invincible by frontal attack, however well maintained, crawled round it, knowing that he would be sacrificed, and stormed its only entrance single-handed, compelling the surrender of its garrison.

Jefferies' stone furnishes no further clue; but bears these noble lines:

> On Fame's eternal camping-ground
> Their silent tents are spread.

Gallipoli, I think, supplied the legend of an Australian company, or what was left of it, fated to make a final assault upon a point which had all day resisted it. Weary and spent, they hesitated; but they forgot their wounds and desperation when one of their number climbed into the open and stood and cried to his companions: "Am I alone in this?" They followed him. As you read on, remember men like these.

I can recall innumerable scenes in the old hallowed garden of Talbot House in Poperinghe. Not that the garden was a solemn place; it was indeed most cheerful. When a man meets an unexpected friend, even to-day, the English instinct is for perambulation. The Englishman obeys an inner law whereby he talks most easily when pacing to and fro. This garden, therefore, narrow in its shape, and tortuous in its pathways, was day by day throughout three springs and summers used as an ambulatory annexed to this great temple of true friendship.

—And They Had Met

A man would blunder rather suspiciously into the entrance hall of the Old House, wonder why he had come, drift from the notice board to put a finger on the map of "Blighty" or of Canada. As he was doing this, out of the little cluster waiting their turn behind him someone would say "Hello," and they had met.

Then for the open door into the garden, every small path of which would be explored, retraced, explored again, by two men talking hard. "What was the news from home?" "How was young Jim?" "How was the old girl getting on without him?" "Did he remember Bill?" "Why, poor old Bill, he finished up at Wipers." And what of Ted, their mutual enemy, who had shown such ingenuity in proving himself indispensable at home! And then to deeper things, not often spoken. Then back to a joke, and then some tea, and then a game of draughts, a letter home signed by them both, and then perhaps into the Upper Room when the bell went for evensong.

At other times the garden was too crowded for any quiet walking, and men were like lizards everywhere, basking and half-asleep; or else, in 1917 especially, a regimental band controlled the grass plot, and no one nearer than the kitchen garden could hear their own minds working.

But the great scene of all was the only sermon ever preached in the garden. The preacher was Cosmo Gordon Lang, the then Archbishop of York, and the date must have been late in July, 1917. The Archbishop had come up that morning from general headquarters; and to welcome him, and hear his message, the garden was more crowded than it had ever been in all its history.

There was no room for any sitting-down, except that the whole high wall was lined with seated figures of successful climbers. The grass, the paths, even the borders too, were thronged with troops. The archbishop took his stand upon the little platform at the summit of the steps to the old concert hall, and gave out as his text the greatest words of Maundy Thursday night: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee."

He said that he had seen that very morning the plans for the forthcoming battle, whereby, as all men knew, the breaking of the Salient at last was to be the supreme objective. He did not flinch from saying that the cost of this huge enterprise must necessarily be paid by many to whom his words were addressed, in life and limb and suffering. Let this then be their one great prayer: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy sons, that Thy sons may also glorify Thee."

A Day Never to be Forgotten

None of the few who have survived since that sad summer day are likely to forget the deep solemnity which fell upon us all. It was not that the announcement told us anything we did not already know; yet here was fatal truth imparted with authority. And when the archbishop's hand was lifted for the final benediction, we knew that

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AROUND ROISEL
Then and Now

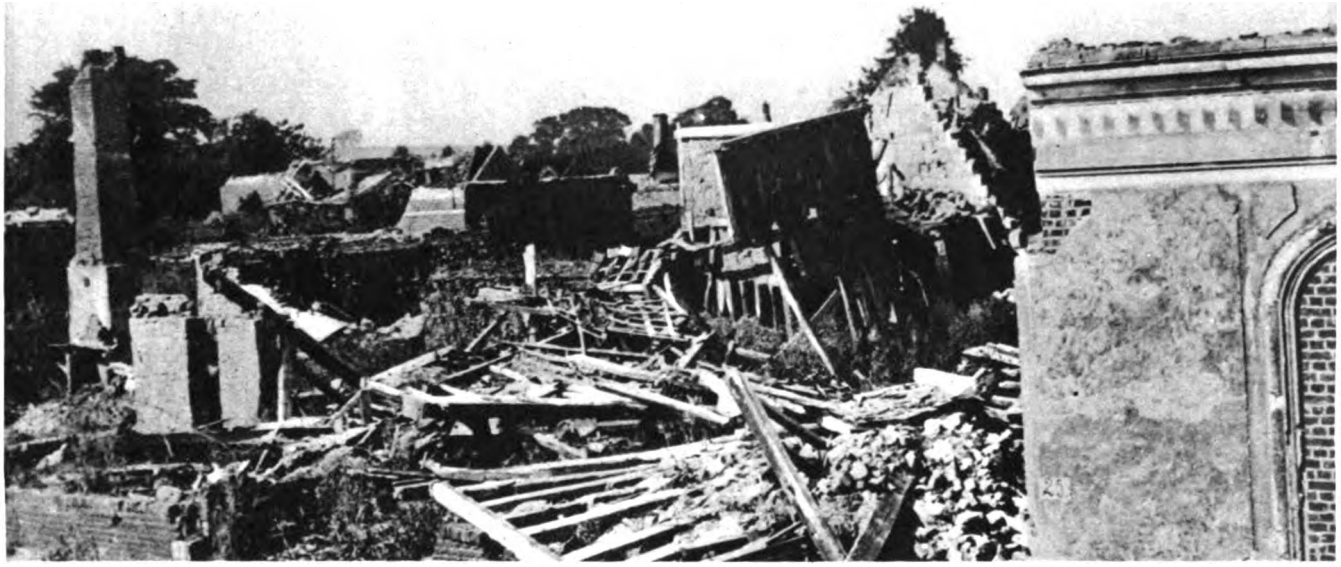

Photo: Imperial War Museum

WRECKAGE OF ROISEL

This small town lies about 12 km. east of Péronne, and 16 km. north-west of St. Quentin. The Cologne river passes through it, and it is also an important railway junction, lines radiating to Péronne, Bapaume, Cambrai, and St. Quentin. Roisel was behind the German lines until the spring of 1917, and during 1915–16 it formed a well-known turning-point for R.F.C. pilots out on "long reconnaissance" flights on the front of the Third, and later Fourth, Armies. The above picture dates from July, 1917.

Photo: G. T. Watson

PEACEFUL DAYS IN NEW ROISEL

The Allies occupied Roisel in April, 1917, and were driven forth from it on March 22nd following. There is now one British cemetery here, in the form of an extension to the communal cemetery. It lies on the Villers-Faucon road, and contains 721 United Kingdom, 106 Australian, 29 South African, 6 Canadian, and about 500 German graves. The special memorials which are nearly always to be found amid such gatherings of War dead in this instance number 15.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

ROISEL : ANOTHER VIEW

A typical view of the wrecked town as it appeared to the British in the late spring of 1917. On March 22nd, 1918, the 9th Dismounted Brigade was in reserve at Roisel behind the 66th (East Lancs.) Division, XIX Corps. This division, however, lost three-quarters of its fighting strength during the day, and by nightfall had been forced back south of the Somme.

Photo: G. T. Watson

SHOPPING-TIME

Much of the credit for defending Roisel on March 22nd, 1918, belongs to the 15th Hussars and the 197th Brigade. The former, after being driven from Templeux-le-Guérard and Hesbécourt, clung doggedly to tactical points behind a line of wire east of Roisel; the Hussars used one squadron to meet the Germans approaching the town from the north, while the remainder endeavoured to hold in check those advancing from the east.

A CHARMI SCEN

Below is a view of Hervilly, Roisel's nearest about (side. Owing to their close proximity, the histo one pla Hervilly was entered by us on March 31st, lost on during the Final Advance. This illustration sh the ge

STILL ATTACT

On March 22nd, 1918, the Germans, assisted on 8th Hussars and entered Hervilly Wood about m enfilade fire, a Royal Sussex battalion at Hesbt, wood by a cavalry and tank counter-attack. He

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SCENE

bour (2 km. distant) on the south-eastern one place is more or less that of the other. lost on March 22nd, 1918, and regained the general aspect of the village in 1917.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

ACTIVE

one tank, overwhelmed two posts of the .m. From here they almost annihilated, by t, but later were driven out of most of the village was finally abandoned about 2 p.m.

Photo: G. T. Watson

Photo: Imperial War Museum

REMNANTS OF HERVILLY CHURCH

This village was the site of one of the chief German aerodromes during the years 1915 and 1916, and used on that account to be a favourite bombing-target for R.F.C. machines. On the retirement to the Hindenburg Line, all buildings yet intact which offered potential strongholds were carefully destroyed. Among these was that useful observation-post, the church-tower.

Photo: G. T. Watson

A HISTORIC TREE

Our photographer was informed that the tree seen on the extreme right of this photograph was found erect when the people of Hervilly returned after the Armistice, and that it was the only survivor of its kind. The precious relic was carefully preserved, and is proudly shown to all who visit the new churchyard. Its once rough form is now a model of ornamental pruning. The area round the church has been entirely replanned.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

LONGAVESNES

Longavesnes is 5 km. north-west of Roisel, and 3 km. east of Templeux-la-Fosse. It came into British hands on March 27th, 1917, when our troops, in their approach to the Hindenburg Line, took also Liéramont, Equancourt, Villers, and Saulcourt, in this region; while cavalry cleared Longavesnes's eastern neighbour, Villers-Faucon. The photograph which we reproduce is one of the many taken in the Somme Area during the month of July, 1917.

Photo: G. T. Watson

PARTIALLY REFASHIONED

On March 22nd, 1918, the Longavesnes–Saulcourt switch-line was held by two brigades of the 39th Division. About 10 a.m. the 110th Brigade of the 21st Division was ordered to withdraw from a forward position in the Battle Zone to Longavesnes, where it was to reorganize and remain in reserve. It reached the village about 3 p.m. Four-and-a-half hours later, the 64th Brigade was ordered to retire south-westward past this point. Longavesnes thereupon became the prey of the enemy.

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we had in immediate prospect losses we scarce dared to dwell on.

The Hour indeed was come. The sons were glorified. They died all through the months that were called summer, as much by drowning in the mud as by enemy action. Passchendaele alone cost 100,000 casualties.

This is indeed the Garden of the Resurrection.

I have four thousand words left in which to tell the story of my parish in the Salient, and of its famous parish-church-cum-hostelry. Pint-pots cannot hold a quart, nor can this chapter of TWENTY YEARS AFTER possibly contain a tithe of all that I should like to say.

I realise that I am given an opportunity which may engender discussion and dispute, even denial, among doubtful minds to whom religion is incredible; but I candidly confess that my whole narrative is meaningless and void, were it to dwell upon the spirit of old Talbot House, without acknowledging its sacred source.

An elderly man, who is wise and generous, some years ago foresaw and seized an opportunity. Lord Wakefield, on his own initiative, bought Talbot House in 1929, and endowed it for perpetual maintenance; not as a mere museum of Flanders days, but as a happy and inspiring heritage to be beloved by many generations.

It therefore now is possible to loiter across the Grand' Place of Poperinghe, to saunter down the Rue de l'Hôpital and to halt (as they did) underneath the sign known to all the troops who trod this narrow street. Two great wide doors, now rehabilitated; glass in the windows where there was but linen; fresh paint which has replaced the solid rampart of piled sandbags of '18, greet you on entering old Talbot House.

Fathers and Sons, Brothers and Neighbours

The hall, no longer with its lights concealed, bears on its walls some maps and some old notices, together with a picture of Lord Plumer just by the kitchen where I met him first, when he brought in a sergeant as his guest. Opposite this, old writing on the wall indicates where rendezvous took place between old friends trying to trace each other, who here put up their names and times of duty. Fathers and sons here met, brothers and neighbours. Could this wall speak, it would be eloquent.

Wander into the old canteen. Here you will find a tea-room to your liking, together with a piano repaired, the keys of which are almost automatic, yes, after twenty years, to the old tunes. These were not, as the sentimentalist stationed at home believed, and still believes, the songs of the Retreat, like *Tipperary*; still

Photo: A. J. Insall.

"POP": THE MARKET-PLACE

R. H. Mottram has described modern Poperinghe as a "village-trying-to-be-a-town." Much of it has been rebuilt since the Armistice—a fact hardly surprising, in view of the heavy bombardments of April, 1918, and earlier—but a few of the old haunts remain more-or-less unchanged, and among them is the market-place. Here is a contemporary portrait of the familiar square, which to every visitor to Talbot House must have been almost as familiar as his own home street.

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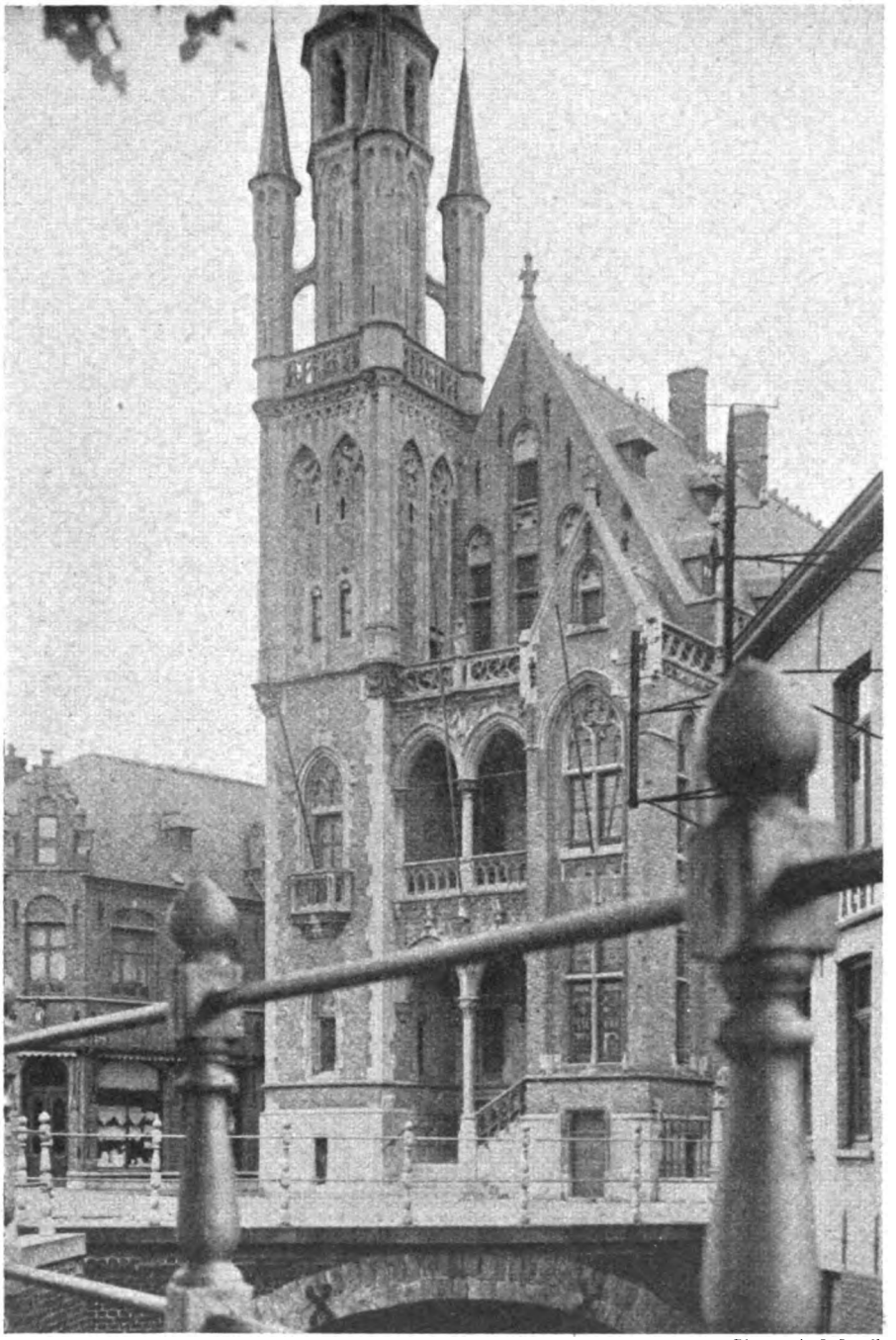

Photo: A. J. Insall.

POPERINGHE HÔTEL DE VILLE

This, too, although largely repaired, will strike all who knew the "Pop" of War days as a familiar landmark amid the strangeness of the post-war townlet. The B.E.F. so long "owned" Poperinghe that one experiences a mild shock on being reminded that the Germans once occupied the place. Yet this is a fact, for they reached it on October 4th, 1914, during the "race to the sea," and remained in possession for some days.

less were they the songs which make for war.

Jests took their place; and *Major-General Worthington*, the number favoured in the Guards Division, competed with the sentimental ballads which went on rhyming "Roaming" with "Gloaming." Then there were other veins of melody brought to the house from Yorkshire and Tyneside, like *Ilkla Moor* and *Blaydon Races*. The piano waits the hand upon its keys which can revive these well-remembered strains.

The airless room, hard by the old canteen, was never wholly certain of its functions. One month it was the shop, and then the card-room, and finally a narrow shrine for billiards; where cues for the small table had a way of pushing their butt ends through open doors into the crowded traffic—never mind!

Proceed upstairs. This was no mean adventure; for Jacob's Ladder never held a throng like to this crowd ascending and descending; but two short flights will bring you to a landing, which has five doors; and to an ingenious lounge, created out of canvas by Newfoundlanders, who hung its roof and walls on rabbit wire, dependent for the most part on one drunken telegraph pole which had plunged through the leaden roof and through the tiled ground floor at the entrance to the canteen.

Inadvertent "Loss of Calais"

In war you soon make use of everything; so that the ugly post, thus interrupting the spaciousness downstairs, soon bore a map of the whole northern front. The map in turn was marked in the last winter with a pinned strand of tape—our thin red line. Early in April, 1918, when the 4th Army came to our Command, Pettifer fetched me to this spot to interview what he described as "someone in the pink." I found no less a man than General Rawlinson, Army Commander of the new arrival. He had looked in upon his way to Ypres to see the House now in his area.

It was a gusty day, a draughty passage, the map was ill-secured—well I remember; for at that moment the red tape fell down and hung in a festoon which lost us Calais!

"The news is not too good," said General Rawlinson, "but I haven't heard that we have lost Calais yet!"

Some ten years later, crossing London Bridge, I met the General and reminded him.

Let us return to the Newfoundland lounge, created in the twinkling of an eye upon the liberal leads outside my window. It took a day to build, and sundry scroungings. Two events here invade my memory. The first was when an unobtrusive stranger, a full private, admitted he was rather fond of chess, and finally on an appointed evening played fourteen games at once against our experts; and humbled the whole lot in half an hour.

The second was a Sunday afternoon, July, '17, just before Passchendaele, when house and garden held some seven hundred. One more arrived, being a 9·2 shell which blew the house next door to smithereens. Our grand old house drooped like a tired lily, then righted itself.

I scuttled from my room into the lounge, expecting to discover death

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and wounds in all directions. I won't pretend that there was not confusion, nor that the canvas wall had been endowed with the defensive properties assigned to cobwebs in the legend of St. Alban ; but here is the truth, not one of all my customers had sustained a wound that Sunday afternoon. One man reclining in an easy chair sharpening a pencil with a pocket-knife had cut his finger—that was the sole bloodshed occasioned by that nearest of all shaves.

The Scout Prayer Book

No longer must we loiter in the lounge. Come through the first-floor window back again into the house itself, and as you enter dip your right hand into a little box lacking a lid—it still hangs where it did. It bears a legend " Help yourself to help yourself," and was kept full of little books, then recent, called *The Scout Prayer Book*, which went everywhere.

Now you can make your choice upon the landing. Upon your left, an unpropitious bedroom had its door open, literally embowered in piles of caps deposited by students. This room contained the famous library of Talbot House. No place so near the line attempted to make any such provision as this small room contained. With Cicero it said, " I refuse to reckon any matter of human interest as beyond my scope."

Never was such a vast miscellany within a compass so inadequate that the one guardian of the library, one of a team who took this off my shoulders, sat on a throne of books before a desk apparently constructed of large volumes, the names of which you peered at with a torch. You made your choice, leaving your cap as hostage. In spite of this precaution books have reached me since the War from prison camps in Prussia. Some specimens, much travelled in this manner, repose once more on shelves in Talbot House.

Allow me to submit to your attention the middle room with a wonky door-handle, which faces on the Rue de l'Hôpital. While Talbot House itself is not extensive, and pilgrims are to-day amused to think it could cater for so many men, this room intended as a dressing-room is far the smallest. It just held one bed. The bed, however, was beyond compare ; a genuine, downright, honest and upstanding affair with four legs and an iron frame, even a mattress—what could any man ask more ?

We had one pair of sheets throughout the War in Talbot House. This pair belonged by right to this impressive instrument for rendering an upright human being pleasantly horizontal now and then. No one below the rank of a field officer slept in that bed. Majors competed for it, colonels cut cards, and brigadiers, recalling Philip Sidney, insisted that another's need was greater. The competition lessened later on when in the month of May, 1916, an Officers' Club was opened in Guards' divisional headquarters, thanks to the energy of Neville Talbot.

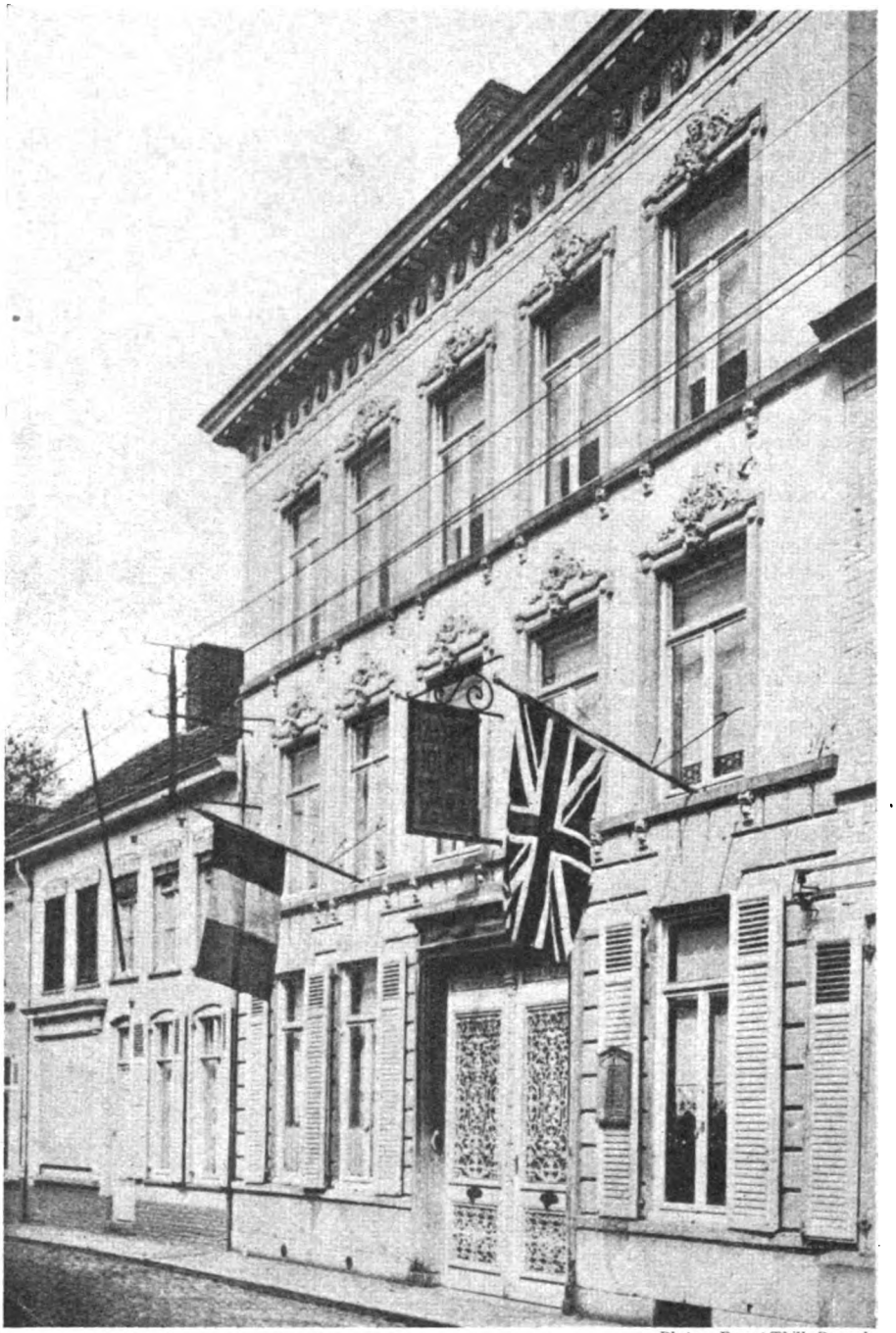

Photo : Ernest Thill, Brussels.

TALBOT HOUSE

A photograph of the celebrated building from the market-square direction, which is the opposite to that of the view on page 95 of *Twenty Years After*. The British were not quite the first Allied troops to occupy " Pop " after the Germans had left it, this task falling to the French 87th and 89th Territorial Divisions, which arrived there on October 15th, 1914. But the British 1st Division was in the town less than a week later.

A Very Knotty Problem

One final point about the general's bedroom was that the blissful winner was quite free to make up his mind whether he preferred, seeing that one

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sheet must be at the wash, to sleep above or below the one sheet which thus remained for him.

The Chaplain's Room stood next. Please understand that three rooms were used for this at different periods. What mattered was to have immediate access to the whole house, and yet to be so sheltered that conversations of a deeper kind could run their course immune from interruption.

But I would beg the reader to observe that conversations of a tragic nature were far more rare than in civilian life; moreover, men had learned to lay aside at least a portion of their diffidence, and fellow feeling could then be relied on. People, to my amusement, imagine that this room was a cross between the Star Chamber and something in the hushed nature of a vestry. My memories of its use (and they are many) scarcely assent to comments of this kind.

It was my policy throughout the house to concentrate the talk about religion in no one spot, if we omit the Chapel. It always seems to me to be unhealthy and disrespectful to a lot of men, who like to be drawn into the discussion, if parsons tend too quickly to withdraw. Religion is a subject of great moment; and it can be relied upon to hold its audience, provided that they are free to state their thoughts. A common sense of decency and reverence asserts itself. The flag is shown and quiet good is done. The house was built upon this principle.

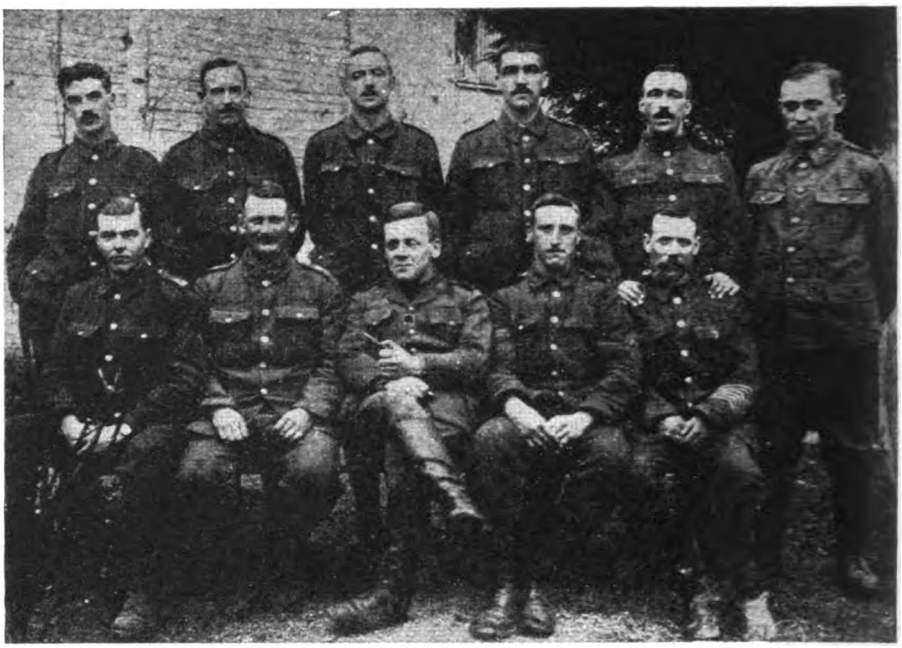

Photo: Courtesy of Toc H.

"TUBBY" AND THE STAFF

The Rev. P. T. B. Clayton and the staff of Talbot House photographed together during 1916. The House was opened in December, 1915, as a memorial to Gilbert Talbot, who had been killed the previous July; and—as everybody knows—"Tubby" Clayton was, with Neville Talbot, one of the original founders.

The ground floor, therefore, of old Talbot House, ministered simply to a man's first needs. The garden brought him rest; the canteen, tea; the piano and hall just introduced him to the fellowship.

On the first floor he found his mind was challenged by books and talk and games and free discussions. The second floor went further with the process. Here hearts were trumps; for these, more quiet rooms were dedicated to the use of pen and paper.

Letters

Among the British folk throughout and beyond the limits of the Empire letters exist written in Talbot House. Could I but quote some cases I have known where letters written here remain most sacred, the pilgrims and readers would soon grasp the reason why I regard these rooms with reverence. Here frequently some friendly officers, eager to help in any way they could, assisted strong souls agonised in spelling, advised on knotty points, or mended nibs.

At night this floor underwent transformation, for stretchers stacked and folded in the daytime came out at night for the repose of officers about to go on leave, who willingly surrendered them at cockcrow to those who were returning to the Line. Even to-day, I cannot cross this room without recalling many sleeping figures to whom this brief provision was a God-send.

There is a door giving upon the ladder which leads men up into the timbered hop-loft; and when you open it and climb

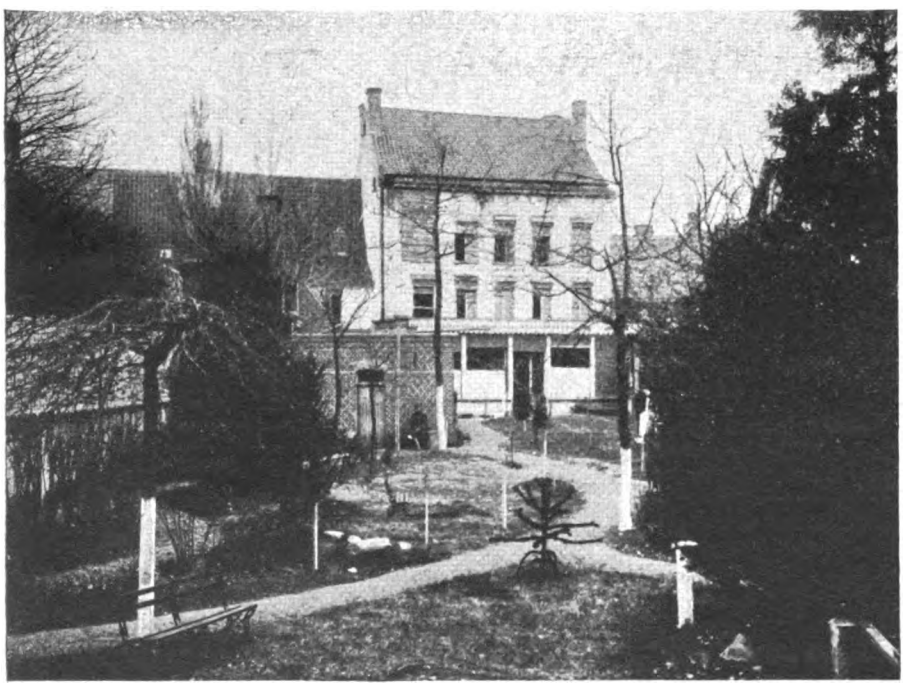

Photo: Courtesy of Toc H.

AN UNFAMILIAR VIEW

Quite a number of people, if they had seen it apart from the accompanying article, might have had difficulty in recognising this photograph. It shows Talbot House from the back, or garden side, as it looked in 1916. The glimpse of the garden can hardly fail to appeal to many memories.

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Photo: Ernest Thill, Brussels.

TALBOT HOUSE: THE HALL

This and the following six photographs are part of a modern series illustrating the interior of the House as it is to-day. Above we see the Hall from the front door. No longer are the lights concealed, no longer are the windows "glazed" with linen. Old maps and notices hang on the walls, and **ancient scribblings, scrupulously untouched, tell of old rendesvous.**

the ladder, your body, mind and heart have had their turn. This steep stair leads to what will make you wonder first at its sheer simplicity and grace; and then at something which is undefinable, an atmosphere of calm, of manly peace, of hopes not disappointed in disaster, of faith which reigns supremely after all.

This is the Upper Room of Talbot House. By no artifice and no advertisement beyond the mercies here vouchsafed to men, this Upper Room has claimed and won allegiance and devotion, not only from the men of Flanders days, but from the world inheriting from them. Here men will kneel, and kneel without persuasion. An instinct tells them that the place is holy, not in the merely sentimental sense; here they are conscious of a Living Presence.

It would detract from this profound discernment, which is by no means confined to pious persons, were my interpretation of this Bethlehem to diffuse your attention with details. Yet as the pilgrim looks about the place, his reverent curiosity is aroused; he desires certain interpretations of what he sees, which blends the normal with the unfamiliar. The Upper Room owes its peculiar arrangement in the first case to the necessity for keeping the main central space unburdened.

Talbot House Chapel

The shell which struck the corner of the house before our occupation in '15, rendered the central floor of the old attic untrustworthy, and only an act of faith employed the room. Thanks to Lord Wakefield's princely generosity, the house to-day is in the best repair; but this old open space has been retained and carpeted as in the days of war. The Chapel thereby gains, as it was meant to, the feeling that the worshipper and priest are not remote, but knit together closely; the congregation occupies the aisles, the sanctuary, the nave, and it is bordered by narrow kneeling carpets facing inward—an outward sign of brotherhood achieved.

Great candle-sticks, two made of Belgian bedposts, two sent from Jedburgh far back in '15, stand sentinels of light above the worshippers, while other candles shed their mellow rays on either aisle; from the central loft depends a crown, swung low beneath the rafters; and from the king beam a Crucifix looks down, a simple figure found in a ruined house across the street.

Let me here add that while these details give impressions with which some will not agree, this Upper Room offended no convictions; and men "disputed not because they came."

Close to the ladder leading to the loft there stands, where once it stood, the tiny font at rest upon a carved post with its footing heavily made in cross-pieces of wood. This font was used for my own christening in Queensland long ago, and came to Flanders when I discovered, to my surprise, that many men desired to be baptised. Beyond it on the right is the harmonium, which lent itself during those three long years to not a few

Photo: Ernest Thill, Brussels.

THE LOUNGE, GROUND FLOOR

This is not to be confused with the Newfoundland lounge of canvas on the first floor, created, in "Tubby" Clayton's own words, "in the twinkling of an eye upon the liberal leads outside my window. It took a day to build, and sundry scroungings." But, if less picturesque, the ground-floor lounge has its features: that piano, for instance. . . .

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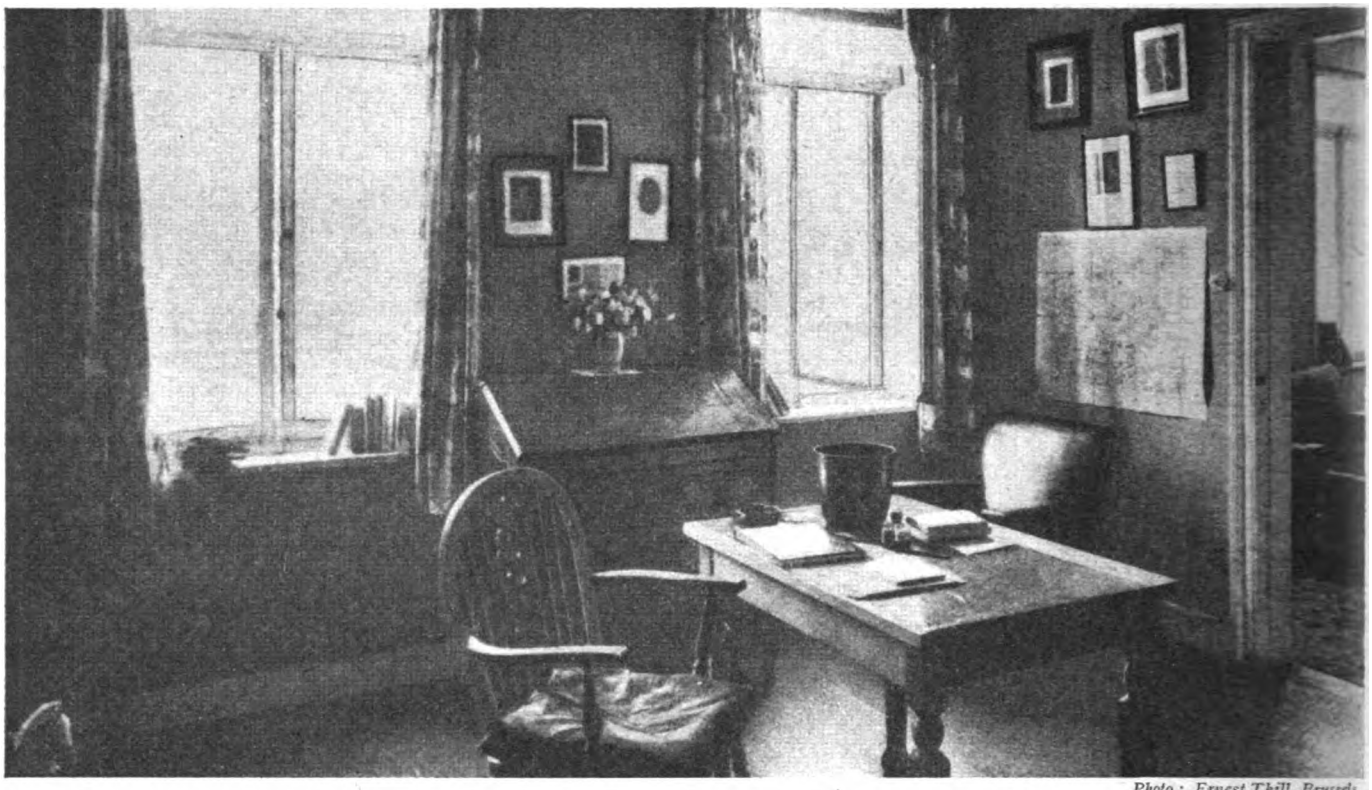

Photo : Ernest Thill, Brussels.

THE PADRE'S ROOM

The Padre's or Chaplain's Room occupied, at various periods, three different parts of the House : the important point being that it should be central, yet secluded. Here we see the final version of it.

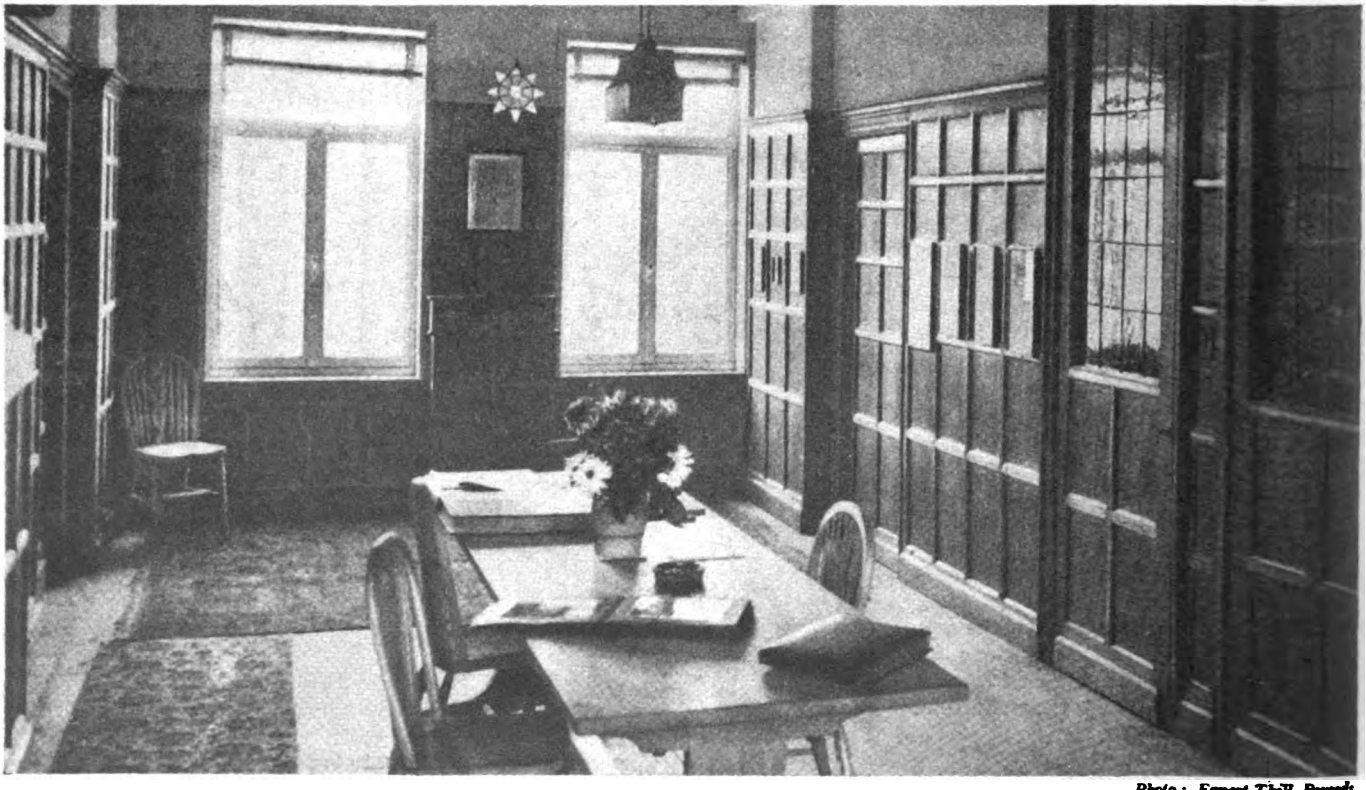

Photo : Ernest Thill, Brussels.

THE UPPER LANDING

Five doors lead off the landing, of which the best-remembered is perhaps that which gave access to the Library. Mr. Clayton justly points out that the literary provision of this one small room was unique on the Western Front.

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Photo : Ernest Thill, Brussels.

LIBRARY AND QUIET ROOM

The modern Library is a somewhat more orderly affair than the old, where the librarian "sat on a throne of books before a desk apparently constructed of large volumes, the names of which you peered at with a torch."

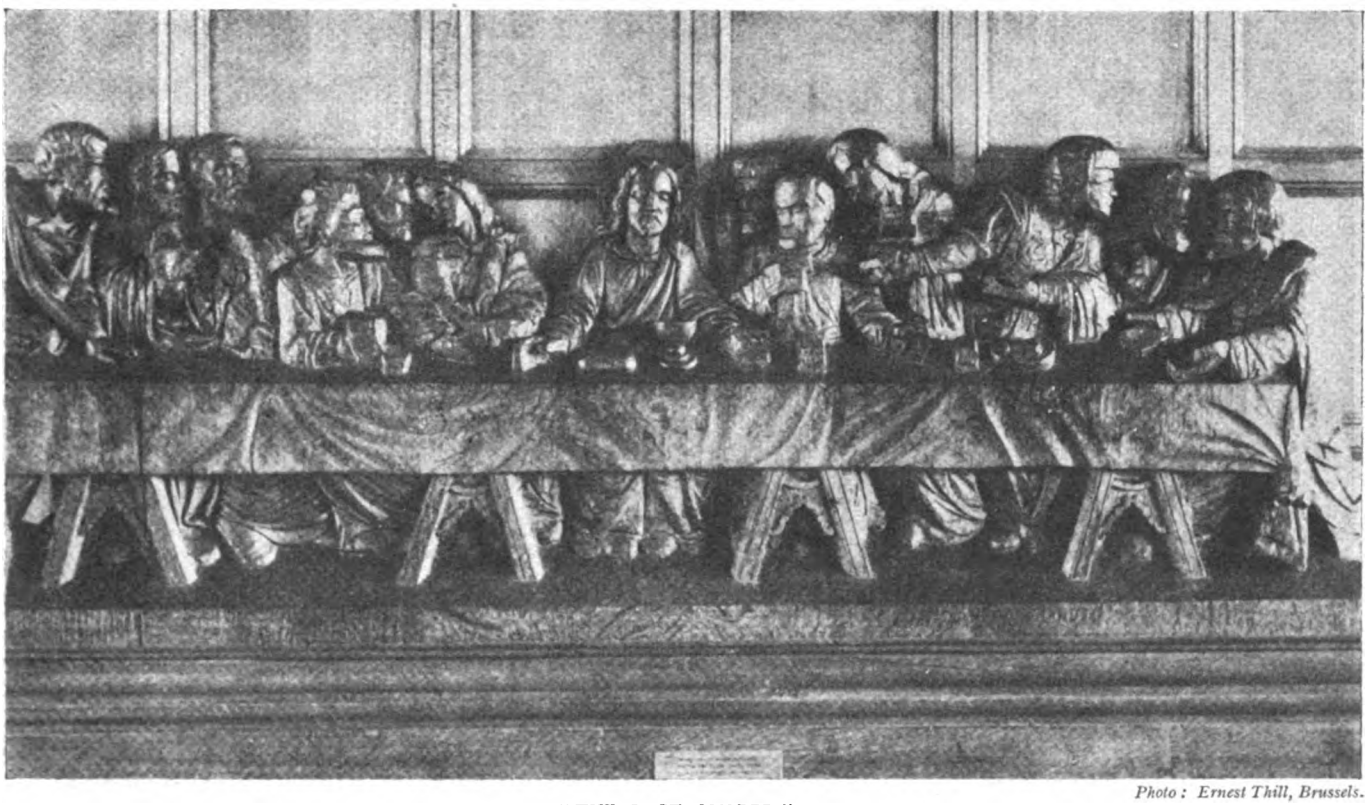

Photo : Ernest Thill, Brussels.

"THE LAST SUPPER"

A quaint 17th-century carving on the Upper Landing, indicative of the fine old mansion which Talbot House had been in the days when it was used as an imposing private residence. Its present fine repair is due to the generosity of Lord Wakefield.

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musicians in the Armies. Indeed, to-day, among the dwindling numbers of those who still survive from the first days, I often come across at some reunion men who can claim that they have touched its keys.

The Upper Room, like early Christian churches, faced west, not east. This was for structural reasons. Therefore, as we look west, we see the canopy beneath the great rough rafters of the loft, the canopy which overhangs the bench itself, the shrine of the whole Salient, God's board indeed. Seldom, if ever, in our race's history has any wood exceeded this in fame. Two fragments of Drake's *Golden Hind* survive, one in a chair in the Bodleian Library. Apart from these, the British can scarce claim a relic more inspiring or significant than is this sacred bench in Poperinghe.

A Hallowed Altar

We have not any altar in our land more pregnant in its influence on men's lives than this rude bench, brought up here from the garden where it was found when Talbot House first opened. From that first moment it became the symbol of Christ in Flanders, of the great White Comrade Who gave men strength to suffer and to obey. No ornamental altar in cathedrals can possibly compare its operations with what this wood has done for men's true worth.

Moreover, its achievements are not ended. Year after year, pilgrim after pilgrim, now coming from a wide circumference, brings his dreams, his hopes, his aspirations; for life needs courage still, and here it is found. This rough-hewn bench has built a brotherhood, or more than that, a veritable family; which looks towards this spot as Bethlehem, and loves it, though unseen, as their old home.

May we not hope, should we not humbly pray, that what began in this old house in Flanders may steadily continue to exert the influence most needed in the world? Here, beyond doubt, Christ came into men's lives, and fed and taught their tortured minds to find in Him alone the way of selflessness, of cheerfulness, of humour, and of self-sacrifice.

A Plea for Toc H

May it not be that some who read these lines will feel themselves constrained to come right in and bring the fruits of their mature experience, their strength of character, to serve a movement which merits more regard than it receives? Yet Toc H, being what it is, is thankful that the few who have survived those twenty years have not lost touch, nor modified the purpose which they now share with many younger men. The Old House stands as Mother to the movement, and more than fifty thousand men and women are conscious that they are its sons and daughters; whose very children, yes, in all parts of the world, look to Toc H as something worth while.

This is no place to add particulars; but if you want to know them, write to me. Above all, do not judge from what you read, nor from a single brief experience which may not give you what you hoped to find. Help us to build Toc H. Your preservation when others died who could have helped us now, means that you may not steadily refuse a challenge which I give you in their name. As they built Talbot House, and brought to it their humour, their courage, and goodwill, so let the men who now are senior citizens of all degrees enter and build Toc H.

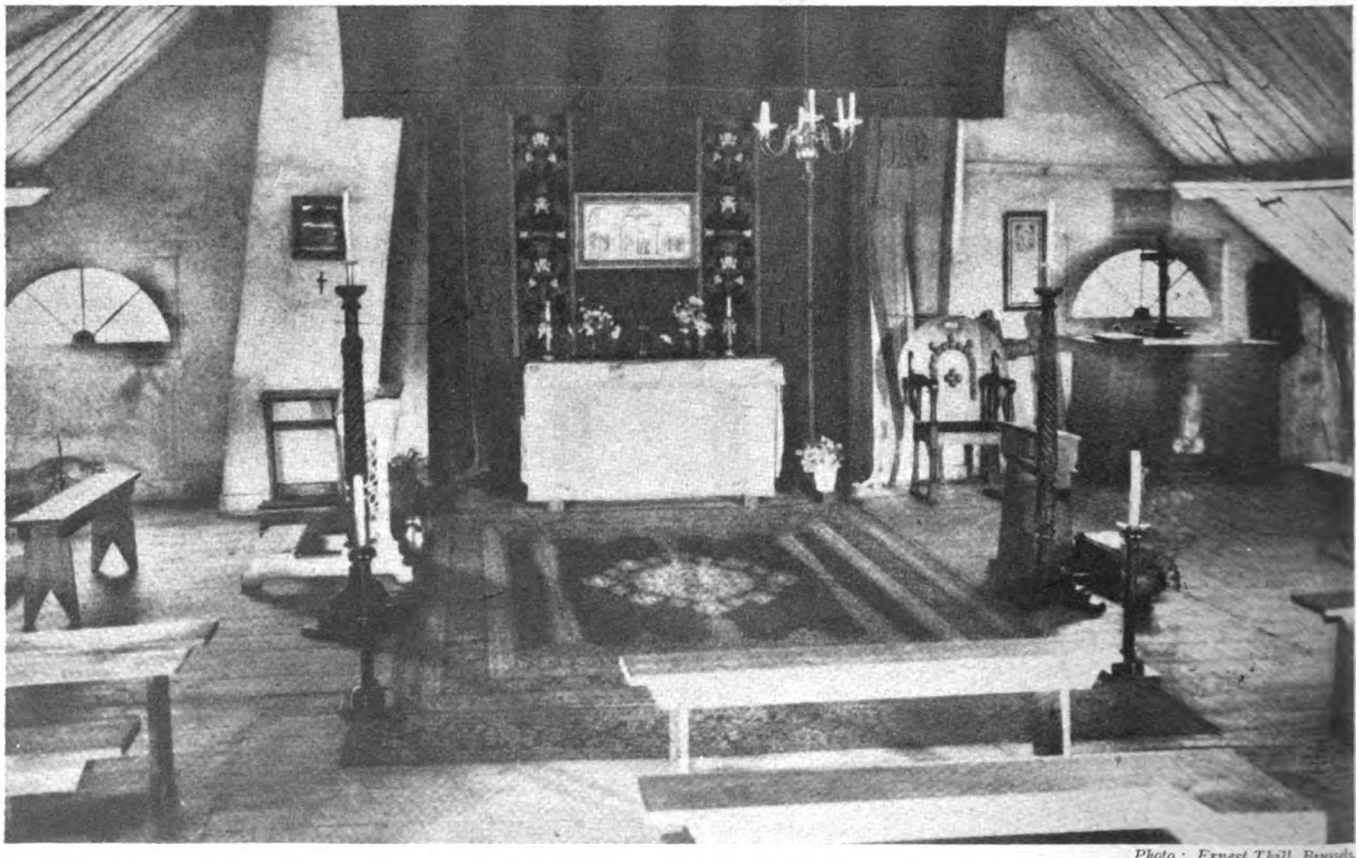

Photo: Ernest Thill, Brussels

THE CHAPEL, OR UPPER ROOM

Mr. Clayton calls the altar of this Chapel "the shrine of the whole Salient"; and few will be prepared to dispute his assertion that no existing British altar has ever been more pregnant in its influence on men's lives than this rude bench, salvaged from the garden of Talbot House when its present occupants first took possession. And yet, as the writer points out, the Upper Room offended no convictions; men "disputed not because they came."

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CHAPTER LXXXVI

THE ADVANCE TO VICTORY

The closing months of the Great War on the Western Front witnessed that which to the seasoned veterans of the British savoured of the miraculous. No longer were they hard put to it to gain a few hundred yards of enemy territory at heavy cost. No longer, as had been only too frequently their fate, did they advance only to be hurled back to their starting-point. Instead, it was the turn of the enemy to withdraw and to fight endless rearguard actions. Gains of ground were measured by the mile and not by the yard. Victory was at hand, and those who had endured so much for so long rose up as men refreshed. In September they were hopeful; in October they were sure. Their hour had come, and they swept forward irresistible in attack, as a few months earlier they had been resolute in the days of adversity.

More than twenty centuries ago the Roman historian Titus Livius (Livy for short) began one of his volumes, which treated of the story of Rome, with these significant words, "I shall here tell of a war, the most memorable of all wars ever waged." The Latin words have more than once been employed as a prefatory notice by historians of the Great War of twenty years ago.

A War Within a War

They are aptly so applied: yet they have a special significance when used for the closing stages of that great world struggle; and the Advance to Victory—a war within a war—was of a nature so titanic and stupendous as, itself, to merit the description "a war, the most memorable of all wars ever waged."

Readers of TWENTY YEARS AFTER are reminded once again to bear in mind the fact that this is not a War history, but a book of memories. No apology is therefore called for from the writer of this chapter if he thrusts aside for a moment the mountainous range of reports, dispatches, narratives, accounts, biographies, and War diaries upon which history is based, and lets memory dwell, if but for a page or two, upon those days of 1918 when, at both the War Office and G.H.Q. in France, he was able to witness the swift and breath-taking sweep from what had seemed in March to be almost disaster, to what became real and obvious triumph within the space of six short months. But what months they were!

The officers of the General Staff at the "Old War House" at that time were an experienced crowd, not likely to labour under illusions, and able to realise in a flash the meaning and significance of little coloured flags shifted daily—and hourly—upon enormous maps. They had all, of course, been "through it"—so much so that the absence of a leg, or an arm, or an eye, had long ceased to be noticed by the victim's fellow staff officers.

Those were serious days at the War Office, when everyone would look in at intervals at the "Situation Room," and little groups—silently sucking at briar pipes—would raise eyebrows as the staff officer in charge, glancing up from the telegram over which he had been frowning, set about extracting those little coloured flags, and jabbing them into new positions that seemed a dreadfully long distance back. There was no need to explain to that interested group about bridge-heads and salients and river crossings and reinforcements: they could "read at sight."

Calm Assurance

They said very little. Occasionally one might stretch out the fingers of one hand, span with them the scale of the map, mutter "Eight miles," and suck in his breath. But of real anxiety or alarm there was never a sign, a trace, or a hint. Among the memories of the War, among all the recollections that come crowding in TWENTY YEARS AFTER, nothing—from the long, swift retreat from Mons to the dark days of that March of 1918—seems more remarkable than the calm assurance, the serene conviction, the confidence, at times almost arrogant and disdainful, that England would come out "on top."

During those serious surveys of flags and maps, one officer once broke the silence by remarking in an absent-minded manner, "I suppose we shall beat those devils in the end." But he said it in that detached, matter-of-fact voice in which a man might mutter, "Perhaps I'd better take an umbrella after all."

The scene is changed. Less than five months have elapsed, and the writer is in France: G.H.Q., a big car, red tabs, and all the rest. It is August 8th, the memorable day of fighting described in an earlier chapter. The British have started to hit back. At "Rawly's" Army H.Q., that sweltering summer afternoon, the present writer looks in, anxious to know if success has rewarded the long-prepared effort of the Fourth Army. To his hurried query a *blasé* young staff officer answers unemotionally:

"About ten thousand, I think, so far."

"Casualties?"

"No. Prisoners."

Ten thousand the first day . . .! And were not the whole British outlook and temperament summed up in that casual "so far"?

These are just memories. They are not history, though they will be some day. Let us, therefore, get back to an outline—for it cannot be more, and there is this to be said for outlines, that they are often clearer than a detailed and filled-in picture—of that great Advance to Victory.

The Hour Had Come

The striking successes achieved by the French and British Armies, by the middle of August, were almost bewildering in their disclosure of a sudden turn of the tide. The soldiers, with their long experience, were quick to notice the ebbing of their opponents' vigour and morale: though the politicians in both France and England were less observant, and were devoid of military knowledge. These could envisage nothing better than a victory to be achieved by a campaign in 1919. But to Foch and Haig it was clear that the hour had come.

Here it will be necessary just for a moment to deal with what is known as

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

CANADIANS AT ARRAS

A good "action" study of Canadian troops advancing along the swamps of the River Sensée toward Rémy, August 28th, 1918. The Sensée and the Cojeul unite 15 km. east of Arras, and Rémy stands in the fork made by the two streams, 3 km. above the point of junction. The date is an important one in overseas annals, for between the Scarpe and Rémy the Canadians made a notable advance, capturing Boiry-Nôtre Dame, and also Pelves.

"strategy." The word often has a mysterious sound, but strategy is really little more than "horse-sense." The great thing to bear in mind, however, is that it is not *merely* horse-sense; for strategy must take into account questions concerned with the movement of the tens of thousands of vehicles required for the feeding, and the supplying with ammunition, of hundreds of thousands of men.

It was this great question of "movement" which now dominated everything on the Western Front; and the aim of Foch and Haig was, in the simplest words, just to make "movement" as difficult as possible for the Germans—so difficult, in fact, that there would be a jam somewhere; for a jam would mean simply that any further resistance would be hopeless.

Let us look at it in this way. After the fighting in August, related in a previous chapter, the German military authorities realised pretty clearly that a victorious ending to the War was out of the question for Germany. The best thing would probably be to fall back from position to position, through Northern France and Belgium, and eventually perhaps into Germany, where the German armies could take up a very strong defensive position behind the Rhine, and there bid defiance to their enemy.

So far as the Allies—France and England—were concerned, this would mean the liberation of France and Belgium from the invader; and, by such liberation, the object of the War might be regarded as successfully achieved. But to a soldier such a view was abhorrent. To treat the Germans as mere trespassers, who were simply to be shoo-ed off ground where they had no right to tread, would be the negation of all military doctrine. It would, they held, be totally insufficient merely to drive the Germans back. On the contrary, the German Army must be prevented from moving back. It must be held, pinned, impeded, tripped up, hustled, and then surrounded.

Destruction—Old and New

And why? Simply that it might be destroyed. Two thousand years ago, or thereabouts, such destruction might have been very real—destruction by massacre; for such would have kept the defeated nation quiet during a couple of generations, at any rate. This method of destroying an army is obviously out of the question to-day, but the army can at any rate be temporarily "destroyed" by being disarmed.

And with a disarmed army the defeated country has no way of effectually resisting the demand of the victors for whatever may be useful in another war—ships, forts, money, colonies, factories, and military establishments among them. It is by the compulsory handing over of such things that a nation knows defeat.

Foch and Haig, and every experienced soldier, saw this clearly. They saw too—what many of the politicians failed to see—that now was the time to put the matter to the test. For the difference between 1914 and 1918 was to them as clear as noonday. Had Joffre and Sir John French in 1914 driven the Germans out of France and Belgium, such an achievement would *then* have

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been a glorious victory. But in September, 1918, the situation was entirely different. *Now* there was the chance of a success out of all comparison with what had been possible four years earlier. And that was the victory which Foch and Haig were determined to secure.

Let the reader, therefore, bear carefully in mind the fact that, in 1914, Joffre and French were only too anxious to drive the Germans out; but in September, 1918, Foch and Haig really wanted to keep them in. Not, of course, to keep them in France indefinitely, but just long enough to "eat" them. And Foch and Haig succeeded. The Germans did indeed leave France and Belgium, but only with the permission of their conquerors and by a time-table arranged for them. And they left most of their guns behind: the victors saw to that.

Now here is where a little "strategy" must detain us for a moment. The worst feature of the situation for the Germans was that Germany—and safety—did not lie directly behind them. It was round the corner, so to speak, and to get there involved a kind of detour—which in military affairs is perilously near a "flank march." Now, a flank march can be a very unpleasant thing indeed. Then, another very awkward point about this return journey was that it must lead through a rather narrow door. The way out of Belgium into Germany, lay between a kind of "appendix" of territory hanging down from Holland on the left hand, and, on the right, the hilly and wooded district known as the Ardennes, which was entirely unsuitable for the movement of large bodies of troops or wheeled traffic, except on a very modest scale.

Pursued by Troops "Out for Blood"

It was, therefore, through this comparatively narrow neck, pass, or gap, that the German Army, or the great bulk of it, would have to pass. Given time, and allowed to approach the gap unhustled, there would be, of course, no insurmountable difficulty in getting through intact. But it would be a veritable death-trap for an army to be driven into this gap with a stronger army—"out for blood"—at the retiring force's heels.

Then again, the stores and supplies, the ammunition and the reinforcements, required for the Germans in Northern France, had, to a very large extent, to pass through this bottle-neck, by rail from Germany. But this was not all. Such supplies, etc., had then to be distributed—again very largely by rail—behind the enormous front occupied by the German armies. The principal lateral channel of rail communication was the line running from Montmédy to Mézières, Hirson, Maubeuge, and Mons.

Without going into elaborate detail, it may be said, and can easily be proved, that the road centres and railway junctions about Maubeuge and Mons were vital to the Germans. Particularly was this the case with Maubeuge. If that place were threatened, the Germans south of it would have to

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE FIRES OF DEFEAT

On page 1306 we showed a British officer watching an ammunition-dump burning during the retreat before the Germans in the Lys offensive. Here we see the other side of the picture—German stores in flames near Péronne, as the enemy retired before the advancing Allies in the closing days of August, 1918. The British conflagration had symbolised a grave danger, a desperate hour for a weary nation; but in the smoke of the German holocaust might be seen dissolving the last hopes, the whole mighty edifice, of the modern world's greatest military power.

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think seriously about moving; and if they did not move quickly enough—and perhaps they would be impeded from moving as quickly as they wished—then their way of escape would be cut off, and they would be "eaten up."

To exploit this situation, so pregnant with possibilities for the Allies, the Allied generalissimo, Marshal Foch, decided upon a great battle-royal on a scale and of a scope never before realised in war. It was to be a triple battle, in which the combatants would be reckoned in millions. Four of the greatest world-powers, the British Empire, France, America, and Germany, would take part in it. The front would extend from the sea to Sedan, a distance of well over 200 miles. On the right, the Americans, supported by a French army, were to attack in the Argonne and Champagne; their duty was primarily to hold, or "pin," the Germans in front of them. In the centre the bulk of the British Army was to push forward with all energy and speed towards Maubeuge. On the left—that is up to the north-west—our Second Army (under Plumer) was to continue, with the Belgian Army and a French contingent, all under the command of the King of the Belgians, to make an attack in a northerly and north-easterly direction.

The Race for Maubeuge

The whole purpose underlying this colossal triple battle was to reach the Maubeuge area before the German armies south of the Ardennes could escape north-westward. The primary duty of the Franco-American attacks was less to reach the Ardennes than to hold the German forces opposite to them, and, by keeping these closely engaged, to prevent their timely withdrawal. Later, if our Allies succeeded in this, the Ardennes country would act as the net in which the German shoal, cut off by the advance of the British armies to the north of it, could be rounded up and collected at leisure.[1]

The preliminary directions for this great combined operation were drawn up by Foch in the first week of September; but before it could be launched there were certain adjustments to be made by the Americans, British, and French. The first-named were charged with the immediate task of "pinching out" a small but very pronounced projection in the German line, known as the St. Mihiel salient. This was brilliantly carried out, with some assistance by the French, on September 11th; and by the 14th the total bag was 16,000 German and Austrian prisoners and 450 guns.

[1] Dewar and Boraston, *Sir Douglas Haig's Command*, p. 309.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTER THE FOE HAD DEPARTED

This view of Bailleul shows the condition of the town when the invader left it, never to return, on August 30th, 1918. He had been there something over four months, and his only other sojourn in Bailleul had been one of a few days' duration in October, 1914. On that occasion, in the rush northward, the *IV Cavalry Corps* reached the town on October 8th, expecting to arrive at the coast before nightfall.

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Photo: A. J. Insall.

BAILLEUL FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

The reason why the enemy did not reach the coast on that October day of 1914 is that, a little way beyond Bailleul, the German cavalry encountered units of a newly-formed French cavalry corps under de Mitry. The Frenchmen put up a gallant resistance, and the invaders decided to turn back toward Bailleul, in and near which they reassembled on the 9th. Two days later, in accordance with the transfer of the B.E.F. from the Aisne to Flanders, our III Corps began detraining at Hazebrouck, and shortly afterwards moved on Bailleul, which it entered on October 14th.

Farther north, the British armies were continuing the operations which had made August a month of such striking success, and the movement spread widely along the front of the French. South of Havrincourt, however, the Germans stayed their retreat on the edge of the old British trench systems west of the Hindenburg Line. The possession of these was indispensable to the assault of the Hindenburg system. Accordingly, on September 12th, four divisions of the British Third Army drove the Germans from the old defences about Trescault and Havrincourt.

Nearly a week later, on September 18th, a day of heavy rain, ten divisions of the Third and Fourth Armies attacked some 17 miles of the German front between Holnon and Gouzeaucourt; and almost everywhere the defenders were driven out of the old trench systems. The depth of the advance exceeded three miles. The enemy resistance was strong, particularly south of Holnon and at Épéhy, and was favoured by the maze of obstacles—trenches, shelters, and wire. But the courage and skill of the assaulting troops overcame all.

Eve of a Staggering Drama

September 25th was the eve of the great triple Allied offensive. The stage was now set, the actors were now ready for the presentation of the great drama which was to foreshadow the future of civilisation and of the world. Before the curtain goes up, and while the players are awaiting their call, it is worth while to correct here some misrepresentations which have grown up round this last stage of the War.

It is often said that by September, 1918, the German Army had, physically and in other respects, deteriorated enormously since the earlier phases of the struggle, and that much of such degeneration was due to insufficient nutrition caused by a shortage of food. Indeed, one eminent writer has committed himself to the statement that nothing so undermined the German soldiers' morale as the sight of the bulging stores, canteens, and magazines captured by them in the Big Push of March, 1918; for, says this writer, a mental comparison between such abundance and their own (alleged) shortage convinced them that they could have no real chance against an enemy so copiously supplied with the necessities of life.

As for the so-called physical deterioration, the writer of this chapter will

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Photo: A. J. Insall.

BAILLEUL: THE HÔTEL DE VILLE
The new Town Hall is shown in this photograph; the remains of the old one appear below. The very complete repair which Bailleul has experienced since the War is a tribute to the generosity of Bradford, by which it was "adopted."

remark as follows. In August, 1918, he was employed on service at G.H.Q. France, which gave him facilities for proceeding to any portion of the British front that he wished, in a large car supplied for his own personal use, and with no other object than to see all that he cared of the fighting-men. If he lacked the skill and literary touch of "Eye-Witness" of 1914, he enjoyed facilities equal to, if not greater than, those of his predecessor.

In the course of his movements during that month of August he saw cage after cage of German prisoners. Nothing struck him with more amazement than their fine physical type and condition. He had been led to expect debilitated and emaciated soldiers; but the sight of those burly "Boches," of those hulking "Huns," was sufficient to blast the legend of deterioration.

The legend of insufficient food was dispelled a few days later. There was a humane custom practised by officers with cars—namely, that of giving a lift to any officer seen hiking hopefully, for a brief "spot of leave," to the port of embarkation at Boulogne. A young Australian was thus secured. The conversation turned to the fighting round Amiens, where the "Aussies" had played a prominent part; and, from the subject of the attack in general, the talk veered to that of the condition of the German food supplies.

German Food in Plenty

"Food!" exclaimed the Australian, "they had tons of it. We captured a supply depot, and there was as fine quality of food as you ever saw in your life. Thousands of cigars, too. Have one." And he produced a packet from his pocket. "Whatever be the condition of the people in Germany, I don't know, but Jerry in the front line is fed well enough."

Let us now turn to the task of giving in brief detail the course of events which marked the opening of the great triple battle. On the right, in the Argonne, the American attack, aided by the French Fourth Army, was launched early on the morning of September 26th. It was attended with great initial success, for by the evening of the 27th a substantial gain of ground had been made, and 12,000 German prisoners had been taken.

Then, however, the American supply arrangements broke down, and for miles the road became blocked with vehicles. The maintenance of the American troops with food, stores, and ammunition, became a matter of almost unprecedented difficulty; and there was a story (probably much exagger-

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TRAGIC RUIN
This type of spectacle must have caused immense distress to those soldiers, on either side, who happened to be lovers of the historic and picturesque. Bailleul is—or was—one of the most ancient of Flemish towns, and its massive Town Hall dated from the 15th century. In the above photograph, taken on September 1st, 1918, traces of former glory are still discernible. The modern community numbers less than 10,000, but is increasing.

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ated) that 700 American soldiers died of starvation. A deadlock therefore ensued; but a deadlock in the Argonne fitted in well with Foch's general scheme; and, in the weeks that ensued, the French and Americans captured, in all, 39,000 prisoners and 300 guns, while holding the remaining outnumbered Germans firmly in their grip. That was what mattered.

Moving northward, from the right of the Allied line toward the left, we have now to narrate the great part played by the British Army. The most highly organised portions of the enemy's defences, consisting of what the Germans called the Wotan sector of the famous Hindenburg Line, lay in front of it. The British Army, severely handled in the great German attack of the spring, had had but one brief month of rest and reorganisation before being plunged into attack once again. And although such attack, if successful, might well bring about victory, if unsuccessful it might go far to revive the drooping morale of the Germans.

A Soldier's View of Statesmen

Concerning this stage of the War—that is, of the British portion of it—much ink has been shed. The literature about it—political and military—is enormous in extent: critical, censorious, *ex-parte*, and often acrimonious in tone. Success was not foreseen by the statesmen, and there was a not unnatural tendency, after the event, both to minimise the doubts expressed at the time and to seek to gain some at least of the credit for the great results achieved. It is sufficient to mention this circumstance; there is no intention whatever of endeavouring to hold the scales between soldier and statesman.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

ESMERY-HALLON

The village which glories in this high-sounding title is situated in the extreme south-east corner of the Somme department, 6 km. south-west of Ham. Our photographs show (*above*) the modern church and War memorial, and (*left*) the former church.

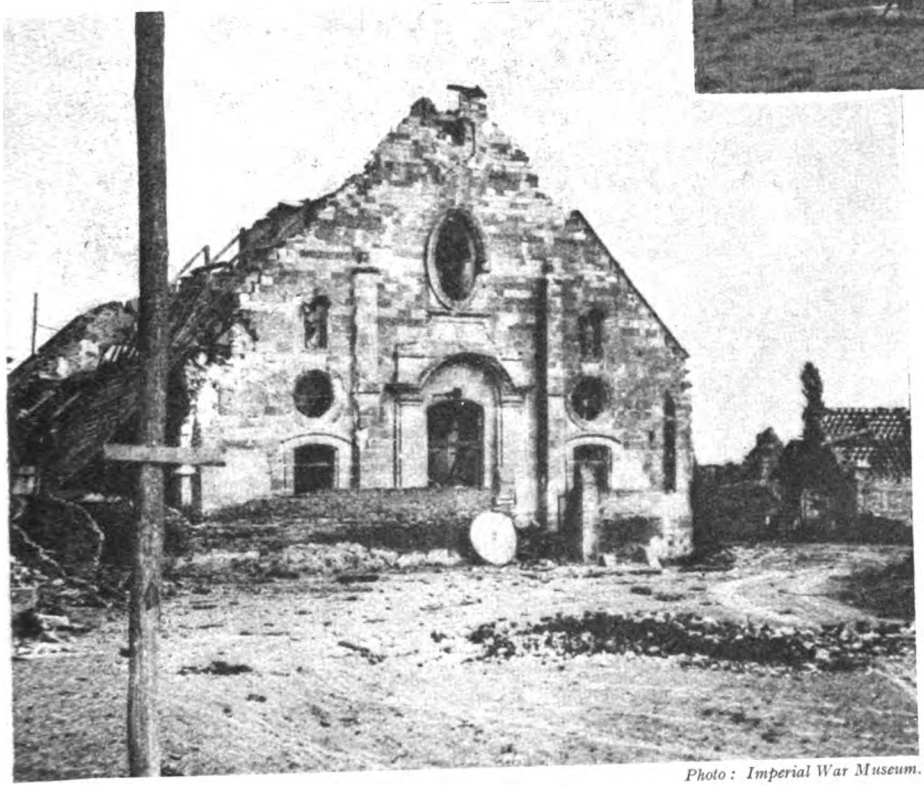

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BEYOND REPAIR

It seems a shame indeed that the damage done to this graceful old Spanish building should have been judged irreparable, especially as the façade seen here, with its round and oval windows, and its statues very nearly intact in their niches, was still surviving when hostilities left Esmery-Hallon in peace again. The Germans had first entered this area on September 23rd, 1914. The village is middle-sized, its present-day inhabitants numbering 700.

All that need be said here is that the statesmen were inclined to believe that Haig was too optimistic ("Ridiculously optimistic," as the War Minister confided to the chief of the General Staff, Sir Henry Wilson),[1] whereas Haig's view was expressed in the words, "What a lot of weaklings we have in London at the present time, and how ignorant they are of the first principles of war."[2] The reader must, however, not overlook the fact that the question of man-power was at this time very serious, and of that problem the statesmen had a much profounder knowledge than had Haig.

Of Haig it should be said—and it redounds to his eternal credit—that his

[1] Caldwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, ii, p. 126.

[2] Charteris, *Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig*, p. 356.

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own decision was definite, and that once it had been made he never faltered or hesitated. He had weighed all the circumstances, and knew that the attack had a reasonable chance of success. On September 7th he had issued a stirring order to his troops, thanking them for their great services, and concluding with the words :

"We have passed many dark days together. Please God, they will never return. The enemy has now spent his effort, and I rely confidently upon each one of you to turn to full advantage the opportunity which your skill, courage, and resolution have created."

Two days later he hurried across to London. The Government had warned him that an unsuccessful attack upon the powerfully-entrenched position behind which the enemy was sheltering would have a very unfavourable effect upon public opinion. Haig, however, was quietly confident, and urged upon the Home authorities the instant need to send out to France, not siege guns and quantities of heavy ammunition for the reduction of the strongest field fortifications in the world, but everything that could increase the mobility of his armies.

Once Again on the Threshold

His faith was justified, his optimism rewarded. The successes of the first three weeks of September showed that not in vain had he counted on the valour and resolution of his troops. And once again we find ourselves on the eve of that great triple offensive of which the Franco-American share has already been briefly noted, and of which the British portion now claims our attention.

The massive *Official History of the War* has not yet reached the operations now to be narrated ; but historians, meanwhile, are fortunate enough to have at their command a classic work from which quotation has already been made.[1] The task with which the British armies were faced on the St. Quentin—Cambrai front was, from every point of view, far more difficult than that which the French and Americans had been asked to perform in the Argonne battle sector.

[1] G. A. B. Dewar, assisted by Lieut-Colonel J. H. Boraston, *Sir Douglas Haig's Command*. For the paragraphs immediately following in the text the author wishes to express his acknowledgment to pp. 320 and 321 of that work.

Photo : G. T. Watson.

A SIMPLE VILLAGE

In fact, Esmery-Hallon again, whose strong feature these days seems to be cafés. The War history of the village belongs, as far as the British are concerned, wholly to 1918. The 21st Brigade, much depleted, lay entrenched in front of this place, supporting the two other brigades of the 30th Division, early on March 24th. Before 9 a.m., however, the bulk of the division was retiring on Esmery-Hallon ; and although the three brigades (21st, 89th, and 90th) together held the enemy for an hour or so, the village was lost about 10.30 a.m.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TOUGH QUARTET

Not quite so tough, however, that rifle-bullets or shrapnel encountering them would bounce back again, for all these men have been wounded. They are Canadians, and are seated outside a casualty clearing-station at Duisans on September 3rd, 1918; one of the men is wearing the Canadian flag over his bandaged head. Duisans lies 6 km. west of Arras, and was under British occupation from March, 1916, until the Armistice.

The Argonne battle had been launched with an overwhelming superiority of force. The British Armies were called upon to attack an opponent more numerous than themselves. The French and Americans enjoyed the advantage of taking their enemy by surprise—at any rate, to a large extent. On the British front the Germans had already been fighting an unbroken battle for a period of seven weeks, and expected attacks from day to day.

If the German defences on the Argonne front were strong, they were not more powerful, either by repute or in fact, than the famous Hindenburg Line. In one respect they were much less formidable, for they were not wholly impassable for tanks; whereas, on the British front, the Scheldt Canal and the Canal du Nord made the use of tanks impossible except in certain very restricted areas.

The Hindenburg Line had been sited deliberately and at leisure, with a view to securing good artillery positions for the defence; and the line so chosen had been tested by battle experience. There were special tactical difficulties arising from this fact.

Fourth Army Artillery Obliged to Wait

The lie of the ground was such that on the front of the Fourth Army adequate artillery fire could not be developed to support the assault, or to deal with the cross-fire of German batteries to the north-east, on what was known as La Terrière plateau, until the British Third and First Armies had got forward sufficiently to train effective fire upon those batteries from the north and north-west.

The Third Army had been meeting with very strenuous resistance indeed on the high ground about Gouzeaucourt, where the Hindenburg Line crossed from the Scheldt Canal to the Canal du Nord. The enemy had sent here some of the best troops remaining to him, among them a Jäger division, the rank-and-file of which fought with all their old skill and determination, beating off our attacks time and again, and jeering at our men as they sought in close and bitter combat to force the Germans from their positions.

The first step was to bring the left of the British battle-front forward across the Canal du Nord, so that the La Terrière plateau and the high ground still held by the enemy opposite to it, and west of the Scheldt Canal, might be threatened from the north and directly dealt with by our guns. Yet to cross the Canal du Nord in the teeth of a determined enemy was a task verging on the impossible. North of Inchy,

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BETWEEN ROYE AND NESLE

The village of Carrépuis, the ruins of which are here shown, bestrides the Roye—Nesle road 2½ km. north-east of Roye, and consequently 8½ km. south-west of Nesle. It is a tiny place of little more than 200 inhabitants, and was of no great strategic importance. The illustration shows French horse transport passing along the main road on August 29th, 1918, during the final advance. Carrépuis had been in German hands since the all-embracing advance of the preceding March.

as far as the floods of the Sensée, the canal was too deep in water for a crossing to be attempted until the enemy had been driven from the eastern bank.

The only part where a crossing was at all practicable was in a narrow sector about Mœuvres. Here the canal cutting was dry, but deep and wide as a modern London road viewed from the house-tops. Further, the ground west of the canal in this sector dropped gently down to the canal bank in long open slopes, destitute of cover and liable to be swept at any moment by the enemy's artillery and machine-gun fire. Upon the storming of this stupendous obstacle depended the issue of the battle on the entire front southward to St. Quentin.

The British armies began their task, with the right of the First Army and the left of the Third, early on the morning of September 27th. Reckoning from right to left—the normal method in military presentation—they lay in this order, from the territory in front of Amiens to the sea: Fourth, Third, First, Fifth, and Second. The Army Commanders were worthy of the troops they led—war-experienced soldiers who by the remorseless winnowing of war had come to the high positions they now held.

Meet the Commanders

The Fourth Army was under Rawlinson ("Rawly" to the whole of the Western Front), a big, self-confident man, one of Fortune's favourites. He was an old Coldstreamer, while Byng of the Third Army had been a light cavalryman, and Horne of the First Army had been a gunner. Birdwood, another cavalryman, had done most of his service with the Indian Army; but so closely had he been associated with the epic deeds of the Anzacs at Gallipoli, that even to-day there are people who believe him to be an Australian.

Finally, on the left, where stood the Second Army, was Plumer, sole representative of the infantry of the line—the P.B.I., God bless it: a man who carried common-sense to the point of genius and wore it on the silken thread of humour. *His* men always swear that Plumer was the greatest of them all. What matter? "There is enough glory to go round."

The inner flanks of the Fourth and Third Armies made good headway in what has been called the Second Battle of Cambrai, attacking with vigour the German defences north and south of that town. Bourlon Wood, the scene of such bitter fighting in 1917, was now at last wholly in our hands. It is a wood of historic interest, for it must be the only topographical feature of the

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Western Front to be represented in a Divisional Sign.[1]

On this first day, on a front of 13 miles, a four-mile advance was made by British troops. Over 10,000 prisoners and 200 guns were taken; and on the next day the area over-run was extended southwards to include Gouzeaucourt, northward to Palluel, and westward to the Scheldt Canal. The left of this portion of the battle-front had now been brought up level with the right, thus enabling Rawlinson to get down to business with his Fourth Army as a whole.

To that army, with the First French Army on the right, was to fall the honour of bursting through the centre of the Hindenburg Line, whilst the British Third and First Armies prolonged the effort to the north. Rawlinson's attack was to start at dawn on the 29th, and two days earlier he had started a heavy bombardment of the position to be carried.

[1] The Gamecock charged with an Acorn was adopted by the 40th (Bantam) Division to commemorate its capture of Bourlon Wood in November, 1917. The Acorn symbolises the wood.

In Rawlinson's Diary

On the eve of the battle—the night of the 28th—"Rawly," as was his invariable custom, wrote up his diary. The news had made him full of confidence: "To-day has been a record in the way of Allied successes on the Western Front. Under Foch's tuition and the lessons of over four years of war, we are really learning, and the synchronisation of the various attacks has been admirable."

Attached to the Fourth Army were a couple of American divisions, whose rawness made Rawlinson somewhat uneasy—especially their inexperience in following a barrage. Still, the General wrote—"I feel pretty happy about the prospects as a whole, for, if the Americans are inexperienced, they are as keen as mustard, and splendid men." And so to bed, with the final entry: "The guns are thundering but I have 1,600 of them for the battle and I go to bed feeling 30 years old."

The 29th September was, however, to be a day of real hard fighting, and the German troops put up a resistance worthy of their reputation and race. Rawlinson's anxiety about the inexperience of the Americans was justified, but his confidence in their dash and determination was vindicated to the hilt. It so happened that several strong points opposite the Americans—who were to be in the centre of the assault—although believed to have been

Photo: G. T. Watson.

BETWEEN NESLE AND ROYE

The detailed history of Carrépuis in the March Retreat is difficult to disentangle, for on March 25th the Roye—Nesle road was chosen as the Anglo-French line of liaison, and the British 30th and 20th and French 22nd Divisions all fell back on the country just east of Roye during the day; also, a broad gap between the Allies existed hereabouts for some time. It is, however, certain that after the three divisions had retreated more or less in concert on a line passing through Carrépuis, the two British formations were sent some miles north of Roye in an endeavour to fill the growing gap.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

NEAR THE DROCOURT—QUÉANT SWITCH

A photograph taken close to Quéant on September 6th, 1918, four days after the breaching of the switch-line. Quéant itself, a strongly-fortified point, had been taken by the 52nd, 57th, and 63rd Divisions in the attack on the line. In the foreground of the above picture is a German ammunition-lorry destroyed by shell fire.

captured by them on the previous day, were actually still in the possession of the enemy.

The result was that when the battle opened on the 29th, the Americans were at least 1,000 yards behind their barrage. This was a fatal handicap, not to be overcome even by the dauntless valour of the United States soldiers. As they advanced, with a determination and resolution beyond praise, they were caught in a tornado of machine-gun fire from the enemy lodged in localities believed captured. But there was no falling back. On the morrow the American dead were found ranged "in orderly lines." As the Roman historian once wrote of soldiers who scorned to turn from danger, "That space where stood their living bodies, the same being slain, their slaughtered bodies covered."

Australians and Americans

The Americans were supported by the Australians, who were later to pass through their line—"leap-frogging," in the jargon of the War. The two races performed their task to admiration, and after further close and bloody fighting all the ground was secured and held. Drawn from opposite ends of the earth, to meet on a European battle-field, those soldiers from two great nations but from one common stock, had met fighting for a single cause.

Of all the gallant episodes that distinguish this day's fighting, none stands out in greater prominence than the storming of Bellenglise by the 46th (North-Midland Territorial) Division of the Fourth Army. The operation called for the crossing of the Scheldt Canal, and for the passage the infantry had been served out with life-belts, rafts, and mats. Although some foot-bridges were found and utilised, the bulk of the infantry had to scramble down the steep banks of the cutting, and cross the water by means of the gear issued to them. Arriving on the opposite bank, the division re-formed, and, breaking into the village which was its objective, cleared it of the enemy. Then it pressed on to the capture of Léhaucourt, taking, in the day's work, over 4,000 prisoners and 70 guns.

By the night of September 30th, the Hindenburg Line, on a front of 25 miles, had been blasted and pierced to a depth of seven miles. The capture of more than 36,000 prisoners and 380 guns was reported to Sir Douglas Haig. And now we pass to the blow launched by the King of the Belgians in the north.

This had started at 5.30 a.m. on September 28th, and had opened with immediate success. "We had a good day yesterday, a good deal better than we thought or expected—2,000 prisoners. The Belgians came along like anything, got 4,000 prisoners and all or nearly all the ground we were out to get." [1] The brilliant work of the British Second Army was not fully realised at the time,

[1] Letter from Sir Herbert Plumer. Quoted in Harington, *Plumer of Messines*, p. 181.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ALSO AT QUÉANT

Men of the 52nd Division—one of the three which had captured the village—displaying German machine guns secured by them. This division was a Lowland one, composed of Territorials, and had arrived in France only in April, 1918, having previously been serving in Gallipoli and Palestine.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BEYOND ÉPÉHY

A group of Lincolns holds a captured reserve trench east of Épéhy on September 18th, 1918. The village had been taken by the Germans, after a gallant British resistance, on March 22nd, 1918, and retaken in the engagement known as the Battle of Épéhy, or of Épéhy-Havrincourt, which had begun on September 12th.

for, as Sir Herbert Plumer wrote in a private letter home, "I don't expect you will get much news of our doings; as we are under the King of the Belgians we do not figure in the British *communiqués*, and the Belgians are naturally full of their own doings."

Splendid Belgian Progress

But by the end of the month the Second Army and the Belgian Army had passed the Menin—Roulers road, 10 miles from their starting-off place. On the morning of September 29th the Second Army reported its prisoners for the previous day as totalling over 3,000. In all, the captures for the battle amounted to 4,800 prisoners and 100 guns, exclusive of guns and men taken by the Belgians. Material progress was now checked by bad weather and the immense difficulty of establishing communications across the Ypres battle-zone.

And so closed September, 1918, a month of fighting on a scale unknown since arms were first borne by men.

While these events were taking place in September, 1918, on the Western Front, in other theatres of war the cause of the Central Powers was receiving a series of hammer-blows. During the summer, information had reached the Allies that the morale of the Bulgarian troops had very sensibly declined. The events on the Balkan Front have been elsewhere described in this work, and all that it is necessary to mention here is that on September 29th an armistice was granted to Bulgaria, at her urgent request, and that on the 30th she was out of the War, hostilities between her and the Allies having ceased at noon upon that day.

The collapse of Turkey was no less rapid. On September 19th Allenby broke through the Turkish lines so successfully, that on the first day of battle he was able to pass his fine force of mounted troops along the coast round the enemy's flank. On the 20th the mounted troops entered Nazareth and swept round the enemy's rear. The Turkish retreat became a rout; on September 30th the pursuing cavalry captured Damascus, and the Turkish army in Syria ceased to exist as a fighting force. All this will be told in detail elsewhere, but some reference is required here in order to obtain a glimpse for a moment of the situation as a whole.

To return now to the happenings in France. In nine days of tremendous fighting, the First, Third, and Fourth Armies had broken clean through the Hindenburg system, while the French First Army, advancing triumphantly on their right, had entered St. Quentin. The effect of this gigantic battle was immediate. On September 29th, Hindenburg pressed the German Government to open negotiations at once for an armistice. Owing to political difficulties there was delay, but events on the other fronts—as briefly mentioned above—soon helped to convince the statesmen in Berlin that Hindenburg's advice should be followed.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

WATCHING THE BARRAGE

A particularly graphic study of war's desolating work actually in process: Australian infantry wait, under cover of our barrage, to play their part in the great assault of September 18th, 1918, against the Hindenburg Line. It was in this attack that dummy tanks were used with great success.

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The "Tidal Wave" of October, 1918

As for the fighting in France during the month of October, historians have made a valiant effort to divide it into separate and "named" battles, but it is doubtful whether their attempts have met with any real success. On the earth's surface there are sometimes vast upheavals that produce a tidal wave, wreaking incalculable destruction upon whatever coast-line may be in the path: but any attempt to analyse the tidal wave's course into separate currents and floods would be futile. The advance of Belgians, British, and French in October, 1918, was of the nature of a tidal wave. It will be sufficient merely to pause for a moment at those islets of resistance which projected above the flood.

Although for convenience a pause in the narrative has been made at the end of September, it must be remembered that fighting does not close down with the end of a month. It is not subject to the arbitrary limitations of the calendar. Thus between September 27th and October 10th the British took 48,500 prisoners and over 600 guns, while on the flank of the great triple battle the French had taken 21,500 prisoners, and the Americans 17,000.

The losses in guns were serious for the Germans, and those in personnel still more so, for there were now no reserves forthcoming. Withdrawal was compulsory both north and south, with the result that a projection was left about Laon. This, too, had to be abandoned, and on October 13th that city was entered by the French.

Up in the north, the resistance in front of the group commanded by King Albert was crumbling; compared with what had characterised this sector during the previous four years, things were now assuming the appearance of a walk-over. On October 18th, Plumer was able to write home that the Belgians had entered Ostend and the outskirts of Bruges. He added, "Birdwood (of the Fifth Army on his right) got into Lille."

That city was entered without opposition. Four years earlier, to the very day, the 6th Division of the Third Corps had fought its way to a position almost overlooking it. To the writer of this chapter a brother-officer had on that occasion said, "I can't find my company barber, but it doesn't matter. I'll get my hair cut in Lille to-morrow."

But Lille had been full of German troops, who counter-attacked with vigour; and the spot where the conversation had taken place was not trodden again by a British soldier until four years had elapsed.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ROAD-MENDERS NEAR HOOGE

Engineers, pioneers (of the 2nd Monmouthshire Battalion), and trench-mortar battery personnel of the 29th Division repairing a plank road to the north of Hooge, October 1st, 1918. The view shows the side of a mine crater in the course of being built-in to allow the passage of wheeled traffic.

Ambitious Objectives

On October 8th, the British First and Third Armies renewed their attacks, and in three days had driven the Germans back beyond the line Selle River—Le Cateau. On the 10th, Foch gave further and more distant objectives to the armies of the four nations. The northern Flanders group under King

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

BY THE ST. QUENTIN CANAL

The broken structure on the left of the photograph is the Riqueval Bridge over the canal, and upon it, addressing the troops, is standing Brigadier-General J. V. Campbell, V.C. The men are those of the 137th (Staffordshire) Brigade, 46th Division, which had crossed the canal hereabouts on September 29th, 1918—three days prior to the date of this scene.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

REMOVING HELMETS

A Canadian soldier bringing up German helmets from a dug-out after the capture of Cambrai on October 9th, 1918. This task was not so simple as it looks, for the Germans during their final retreat displayed an increasingly diabolical ingenuity in the invention of "booby-traps," and Cambrai, in particular, abounded in them.

Albert was to advance towards Belgium (we have seen how on the 18th the Belgians entered Ostend and Bruges); the British Armies were to push on towards Mons and Avesnes; on their right the French First Army was to advance up the Oise; while beyond that again the French and American armies were to continue their northward movement.

Everywhere the Germans were being thrust back. The destruction wrought by them in their retreat was carried out on a scale then regarded as barbarous; but the wrecking of roads, railways and bridges was actually the only means by which their exhausted armies could put off the day of decisive defeat.

The enemy, however, did not stop his orgy of demolition at this. All means of useful supply were dealt with, particularly coal-mines. Numerous factories were wrecked, some after they had been thoroughly rifled. Even the co-operative dairy-produce factories in small villages were not spared. The residential quarter of Cambrai was set on fire, and the main shopping thoroughfare of Douai was destroyed.

The pens of Major Carey and Captain Scott have left us a vivid picture of the pursuit by the British armies.[1] The night sky was lurid in a dozen different places with conflagrations. Gun-flashes showed pale and electric. Along the rain-soaked roads interminable bus and lorry convoys, carrying troops, relieving or relieved, glinted wetly. Faint, half-shrouded flickers came from cottage casements. The open doors of churches showed moving lanterns within, and at the sound of passers-by bandaged heads and limbs were raised from among the straw spread on the pavement of the nave. Near by, the dull glow of a cooker fire struck the ground and outlined the putteed legs of busy cooks.

By day the country was a waste hardly broken by tillage. The village chimneys were smokeless and dead. Black window-gaps and shell scars defaced warm red walls. Furniture stood in the streets. An unimaginable litter of clothing, equipment, arms, ammunition, artillery weapons, and tanks lay strewn over the land and hidden in every corner of villages and houses. Troops wandered idly about newly-taken towns. They sat before the lifeless cafés, the music of a mouth-organ or an accordion making the little groups gay against their macabre surroundings.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ON THE ALERT

A Loyal North Lancs. patrol in a burning Cambrai street after the capture. A good example of the type of "booby-trap" encountered here is that of a piano in a certain estaminet. This piano was used time and again by British soldiers, until one day it happened that someone struck a chord which had not been played before—and at once the whole estaminet blew up.

German Machine-gunners Fight to the Finish

The Germans were on the run, and the efforts of Foch, Haig, and King Albert had all one common end—to harry and impede the fugitives so that orderly flight would be impossible and surrender the only alternative. On October 17th, the British Fourth Army and the French attacked west of the Oise-Sambre Canal, and three days later

1 G. V. Carey and H. S. Scott, *An Outline History of the Great War*, pp. 250–2.

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the Third Army and a portion of the First attacked the line of the River Selle, north of Le Cateau—the town which in 1914 had given its name to a battle wherein the dogged heroism of Smith-Dorrien's Second Corps had completely upset the German plans.

Further north, Birdwood's Fifth Army, and the Belgian, French, and British forces under King Albert, were remorselessly pressing the pursuit. Everywhere there was a swaying and distortion of the whole line of defence. In some places the Germans resisted stoutly, with their old dour tenacity and heroism; in others they surrendered almost at once. Right to the end the German machine-gunners showed that they were the very flower of Germany's fighting men.

And so October wore away. Nothing—not even a miracle—could save the Germans now. It has happened, in great wars of the past, that, at the critical moment, the intervention, or threatened intervention, of a neutral Power has saved the vanquished combatant from annihilation. But in October, 1918, there were no neutral Powers of the first rank left. All were in the struggle. One great nation, America, might at this time have been a neutral state, had it not been for Germany's insane folly in 1917. Germany had sown the whirlwind, and was now to reap it.

It is difficult to realise to the full the feeling of horror and dismay which, by now, must have been sweeping over Germany. There was not a German living who had not grown up in the conviction of the invincibility of the German Army. Of the senior officers fighting in this year 1918 there were not a few who had shared in the marvellous triumph of forty-eight years earlier.

In July, 1870, France had declared war on Prussia. The first shots had been fired in the opening days of August. A month later almost every French Regular soldier was either in his grave, or in hospital, or in a prisoners' camp in Germany, or shut up in a fortress from which he was never to emerge but as a captive. A fortnight later Paris was invested, and the war was to end with the loss to France of two provinces, the yielding up to Germany of two great fortresses, and the payment to her of a war indemnity of £200,000,000—in those days a colossal, a fantastic sum.

There was still one further mighty effort to be made by the Allies in France. It was to prove a short one, and began with a preliminary operation on November 1st. But it will be convenient to pause here for a moment, before telling in a final chapter of the last eleven days of the Great War.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE RECONQUEST OF LILLE

In this illustration we see an Army Service Corps man surrounded by a jubilant crowd in the midst of the Grand' Place, Lille, on October 17th, 1918. The town had been skilfully encircled by the 57th (West Lancs.) and 59th (North Midland) Divisions, and entered a few hours prior to the taking of our photograph—this entry being one of the last triumphs enjoyed by the almost obliterated Fifth Army. Lille had been in German hands since August, 1914.

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CHAPTER LXXXVII

AVALANCHE IN PALESTINE

General Allenby's victory over the Turks in Palestine was, perhaps, as spectacular and complete as could be imagined. Within a period of some eighteen months, from April, 1917, to September, 1918, the Turkish defenders of the Holy Land were driven from position after position, until in the end they were rounded up or slain. It should ever be borne in mind when contemplating Allenby's achievement, that not only was he forced to spend several months of 1917 in training and equipping his troops before mounting his first assault upon the Turkish lines, but that later, in April, 1918, after several of his finest divisions had been recalled to France, he was obliged to reorganise his army.

JERUSALEM had provided a most acceptable Christmas present for the British public and the Prime Minister. It had removed the danger to Baghdad by killing the *Yilderim* project. It had drawn reserves of Turkish man-power from every front; and it had stirred Christian and Jewish enthusiasm in many parts of the world.

Something to Balance Passchendaele

Lloyd George, however, was looking for a further resounding success wherewith to balance failure at Passchendaele and the Russian defection. He therefore urged upon Allenby the need of drawing profit from his victories by an early advance on Aleppo. By that means Turkey would almost certainly be thrown out of the fight, and one of the "props" of the Central Alliance knocked away.

Allenby demurred. During the recent operations, supply difficulties had been enormous. They had reached a climax on Christmas Day when torrential rains flooded the country and submerged the railways. Supply depôts stood up as islands in a sea. Camels slipped, fell, and were drowned. At sea, fierce gales raged, forbidding the landing of cargoes. Only the fact that it had been possible to form forward supply-dumps saved the troops from starvation.

The damage done to roads and railways would take long to repair, and there was probably much more rain ahead. Allenby was therefore anxious to place his supply on a firm basis before he undertook any further adventure. And, as to an advance of 350 miles, he had neither the strength nor the organisation for such a movement; nor, if reinforced, would he be able to make provision for the additional numbers.

It is possible that the Government were right, and that heavy pressure continued after a succession of victories would have broken the Turkish will to resist. But it is unlikely. "Johnnie" Turk showed himself a dour fighter from first to last; and calculations, often enough made, of his early and easy defeat, were again and again found to be fraught with error.

Allenby's plan, which was eventually accepted under protest, was, firstly, to safeguard his right flank by securing the crossings over the lower Jordan; then to strike east of that river against the Hedjaz railway, in the hope of cutting off all Turks—estimated at 20,000—south of Amman; and then, when the railway was ready, to advance to the line Haifa—Tiberias. Certainly, an imaginative Premier might well be excused for regarding such projects as uninspiring; and they compare unfavourably with the later plans evolved by the same commander in the field.

Reviving a Derelict Land

At this point we may note that, as soon as Jerusalem was occupied, the whole of southern Palestine was subjected to administrative control. The civil services, at best inept under Turkish rule, were restored, enlarged, and improved. Finances were placed in order, schools opened, postal services introduced, and, what was especially important for the well-being of the inhabitants, the wasted agriculture was revived by the importation of stock and seed-grain. Eventually this fostering care enabled the inhabitants to relieve us of the cost and labour of their sustenance, which for some months was a considerable burden on the Army.

The country on either side of the Jordan, especially the mountains of Moab to the east, was found to be more difficult than any previously encountered. From north to south, even without opposition, movement across the steep sides of the wadis might be regarded as impossible, and from west to east painfully slow. Commanders were reduced to such extremities as making ropes out of puttees to lower their troops down precipices. On the western side was the "Wilderness" of the Bible—an abomination of desolation except in spring, when this least promising of soil was carpeted with flowers: anemones, tulips, lupins, poppies.

Here every feature bore some witness to Biblical story, stirring the soldiers deeply, for thousands of them carried Bibles in their packs and studied them diligently. There was Nebi Musa—the tomb of Moses; Jebel Qruntul—the Mount of Temptation; the Wadi Kelt, where Elijah was fed by the ravens. For the moment, however, interest was centred mainly in the sacred Jordan, for that river, swollen by the rains, was some 40 yards wide and running fast, presenting a formidable obstacle.

Between February 19th and 22nd, the 60th Division and the Anzac Mounted Division, advancing eastwards, drove the Turks out of Jericho. This city, rich in memories, where Joshua's trumpets had sounded and where Christ had talked with the publican, had fallen from its high estate. It was now decayed and incredibly filthy.

A Strange Coincidence

Continuing their advance, the British troops occupied the escarpment west of the Jordan, and shortly afterwards pushed their line northward for about six miles over the greater part of the front, the 54th Division on the left and the 10th and 74th Divisions on the right doing most of the work. In this fighting a curious incident occurred. Private Whitfield, of the Shropshires, charging the enemy alone, captured a Lewis gun. and turned it on the Turks. He then found it to be one which his battalion had lost some weeks before. For this action, and for destroying, single-handed, a bombing-party, he received the V.C.

These two advances were costly; some 1,900 casualties being suffered and only 400 Turks captured. The physical obstacles were such that they were overcome only by most resolute action on the part of the troops. Almost everywhere movements had to be made by night, as men crowding by day on the

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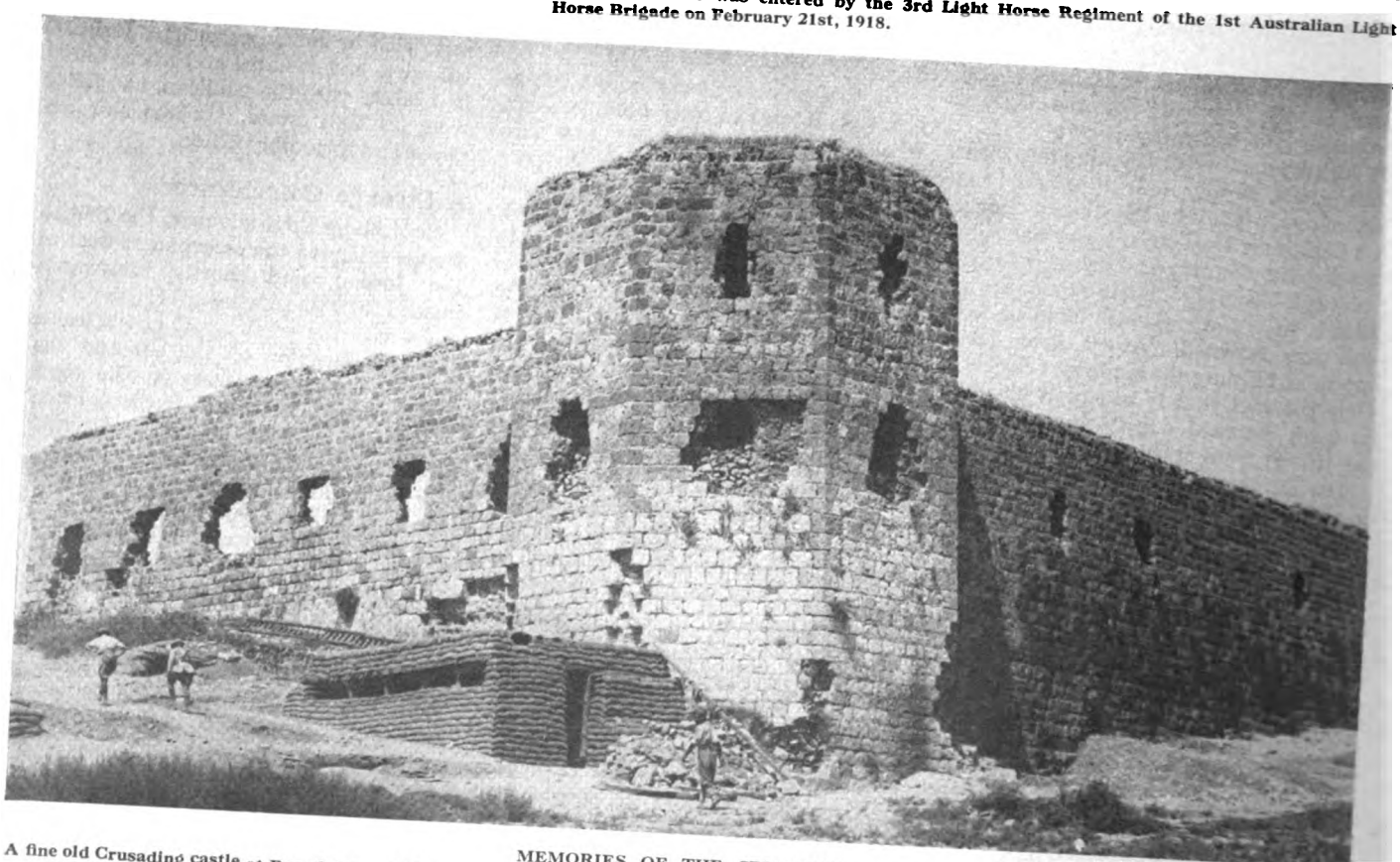
THE MAIN STREET, JERICHO

A view of the main street shortly after the British occupation. Jericho was entered by the 3rd Light Horse Regiment of the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade on February 21st, 1918.

Photo: Imperial War Museum



MEMORIES OF THE CRUSADES

A fine old Crusading castle at Ras el Ain, which was on the 54th Division front from the time of the passage of the River Auja, December 20th, 1917 until the advance of September 18th, 1918. It became part of the front line on March 12th, 1918.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

AN INCIDENT IN JERUSALEM

H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught decorates General Allenby with the Knighthood of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem : a scene in the courtyard of the Tower of David at Jerusalem, March 19th, 1918.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

DRESSED TO KILL

A Scots battalion—the 2nd Black Watch—dressed in long khaki drill trousers and short puttees, which were worn instead of kilts to guard against infection from mosquito-bites, behind sandbag defences on the coast near Arsuf, June, 1918.

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few points of passage over the wadis were an easy target for machine guns.

Just before these battles, von Falkenhayn had been superseded by Liman von Sanders—the victor of Gallipoli. Both men rank high as commanders. With regard to the conditions of warfare in Palestine, where open flanks were unavoidable, the former believed in a strategy of limited manœuvre. He would occupy positions and entrench them strongly, but he would keep a large proportion of his troops in reserve either to regain lost ground by counter-attack or to cover a retreat. Von Sanders, on the other hand, permeated, no doubt, by the tactics of Gallipoli, where not an inch of ground could be abandoned, kept the bulk of his troops either in the trenches or close up to them.

Falkenhayn having, with his staff, barely escaped capture, first at Junction Station and then at the Mount of Olives, had ordered his headquarters from Nazareth to Damascus. Von Sanders brought them forward again and placed them at Nablus even nearer the line than before: an arrangement, as will be seen later, that nearly resulted in his own capture.

Allenby's last advance to the north now enabled him to turn east again on a front conveniently wide for forcing the passage of the Jordan. He entrusted the operation to Major-General Shea, giving him the 60th and Anzac Divisions, the Cameliers, armoured cars, bridging-trains, and extra guns, and instructing him to cross the river, occupy Es Salt with his infantry, and push his cavalry to Amman for the purpose of destroying the great viaduct and tunnel there.

March 21st, 1918—West and East

The operation began on the 21st March, at the very hour when the Germans were making their great thrust against the Fifth Army at St. Quentin. Crossings were to be effected on the main road, at Ghoraniye, and further south at Hijlah. At the former point the bridge had been destroyed, and the fierce current swept all rafts, pontoons, and swimmers quickly down-stream. At Hijlah, however, some swimmers of the 2/19th Londons and of the Australian Engineers got a line across and began pulling rafts over, until, by 7.45 a.m. on the 22nd, a whole battalion was on the eastern bank.

The remaining battalions of the brigade were then collected from Ghoraniye and crossed at Hijlah. H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, who was paying a visit to Palestine, came up afterwards and complimented the brigade on its performance.

At midnight the bridge-head was formed. The Auckland Mounted Rifles

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

DRANOUTRE

The village called Dranoutre lies 12 km. south-west of Ypres, and a bare 2 km. on the Belgian side of the Franco-Belgian frontier. It is not on any of the main highways, but stands astride the road from Locre to Neuve-Église. The place came early into British War annals, for the 1st Cavalry Division captured it on October 14th, 1914. The photograph which we reproduce above is in reality post-war, for it was taken in March, 1919.

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Photo: G. T. Watson.

CHURCH AND VILLAGE

In April, 1918, Dranoutre lay behind the sector of the Flanders line held by our IX Corps. On the 18th, however, the IX Corps was relieved by French troops under Robillot. Our Allies were thus involved in the important Kemmel battle of the 25th, when Dranoutre was among the places lost by them. To-day the village contains two groups of British graves, one in the churchyard, the other on the outskirts. In the former lie 79 United Kingdom dead, in the latter 421 United Kingdom, 37 Empire, and 1 German.

then rode up the left bank, and, charging every enemy post, cleared the Turks from the main road near Ghoraniye. The river having dropped a little, a bridge was thrown across at that point, supplemented, before nightfall on the 23rd, by three other bridges. By that time, however, three precious days had been wasted, and the possibility of effecting a surprise at Amman had been lost.

The advance was continued on the 25th and 26th—against light opposition, indeed, but under severe trials of weather and terrain. The cavalry was exhausted. The Cameliers, almost carrying their camels night after night up slippery paths in the mountains, introduced a new vocabulary into the Holy Land. On reaching Es Salt, the mounted troops were to have pushed straight on to Amman; but, so utterly tired were men and animals, that a day's rest had to be allowed.

Chaytor attacked Amman on the 28th, and again on the night of the 28th/29th, in the latter attack being supported by the 181st Brigade. But the Turks, favoured by a long warning, had summoned reinforcements from north and south, and were greatly superior in men and guns. The British assaulted the lines with desperate valour, but managed to penetrate them only at a few points. In the meantime, the Jordan had again risen, and Turkish reinforcements were threatening Es Salt from the north; so, on the 30th, the troops were withdrawn, and by the evening of April 2nd the whole force, except for a bridge-head on the left bank, was west of the river. The magnitude of the undertaking may be gauged from the fact that 30,000 animals recrossed the Jordan.

A Cool Hand

Bell, of the 3rd A.L.H., posted with his regiment at Es Salt to guard the northern flank against 2,000 Turks, declined to take a negative view of his task. He crept forward in the darkness and attacked their leading unit, capturing three machine guns. Then, pursuring his advantage, he drove several hundreds of Turks back in confusion for four miles, just when they were expecting an easy victory.

With the troops travelled many hundreds of Christians from Es Salt, fearful of Turkish vengeance for the welcome they had given the invaders. Old men, women, and children toiled painfully along, burdened with their meagre possessions. The soldiers, tired to death as they were with continual marching and fighting, yet managed to carry many of the women on their

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horses, and of the kiddies on their backs.

Though we captured nearly 1,000 prisoners, against casualties amounting to 1,348, the raid, as such, must be counted a distinct failure. On the other hand, it had two good results. It relieved pressure on the Hedjaz Arabs and enabled Faisal to close on Ma'an, permanently destroy the railway to north and south of that point, and effect a temporary capture of the station, together with 270 prisoners; and, what was more important, though not part of the original aim, it attracted the attention of the Turks to their eastern flank—a point which was to be of considerable value to Allenby in his later operations.

As usual, touches of humour relieved the bitterness of the struggle. Here are two of them from a single unit—a Camelier battalion.

A trooper on outpost on the edge of a creek had removed his clothes to dry them. Then, when standing dressed only in his hat and boots, he was shot at by a Bedouin. "By cripes, I'll fix you," he yelled, and dashed across the stream into the shrubbery from which the shot had come. Shrieks and screams greeted him. He had charged a crowd of Bedu women coming to get water. He fled.[1]

During the attack on Amman, a Scottie stumbled across three Turks working a machine gun. Having lost his rifle, he rushed them, swinging a haversack containing two tins of meat. After he had thumped their heads with this unique weapon, the Turks surrendered. Then, shouldering the machine gun and driving his prisoners in front of him, the Scottie returned triumphant.[2]

From Snow to Scorching Heat

As the troops returned from the raid, for once they found the Jordan valley welcome. Moving down from the plateau, "the sun came out and they descended the flower-carpeted slopes, sheltered from the east wind, into an ever-increasing heat-bath. The change was violent, from sleet and . . . snow, to a high summer temperature, but for the moment was very pleasant."[3]

Most of the men were by now pretty old campaigners, and were learning to look after themselves under any conditions. Even on the coldest and wettest of nights, a multitude of little fires would flame up in the bivouacs, and billies would boil merrily over them. For the veteran soldier—especially the trooper—was never without a packet of fuel which he had "scrounged" somehow from somewhere. Fires and the never-failing rum-ration saved many a life in the Judæan hills that winter.

After the rain, the mud, the bitter cold, the ceaseless battle, it was a joy to win a rest in the back areas, to wash, to get clear of lice, and to bathe in the sea. Still better was it to find oneself in the Soldier's Rest at Qantara, administered by the noble women who made it a home from home for every soldier.

The lice in Palestine, as on every other front, were an abiding plague. Here is a story of them. "It was this way: the lice had been chewing me to pieces, and I was sitting outside my bivvy, with my trousers in my hand, running a lighted match along the seams to roast the live-stock, when a little Tommy came along and took a keen interest in what I was doing.

"'Be you killing chats, choom?'

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The Tommy promised a bottle of something his sweetheart had sent him "for killing them things." Unfortunately, the something was meant to be applied diluted, and the Camelier used it neat, killing the lice indeed, but losing much of his skin in the process.[1]

Another amenity was the telephone, which enabled an officer to issue orders from his "flea-bag." On one occasion, an Australian camp was rushed at night by the Turks. A ring from the staff officer: "The enemy has broken in on us, sir. What orders?" "Kick the b——s out," replied the brigadier as he turned over to finish his sleep.

The Conventional Version

His despatch read more conventionally. "I have the honour to report that the enemy heavily attacked my camp last night and penetrated at a few points. I gave immediate orders for the delivery of a counter-attack. The —th and —th A.L.H. then charged with the bayonet and drove the Turks out of camp. There was no further disturbance."

The German victory at St. Quentin had an instantaneous effect on the Palestine campaign. The 7th (Indian) Division relieved the 52nd, the 74th was placed under orders for France, and arrangements were made for the replacement of 19 battalions and many yeomanry regiments by Indian units, many of them raw and untrained.

Nevertheless, Allenby continued his pressure. Early in April, in the coastal sector, the 54th, 75th, and 7th (Indian) Divisions attempted an advance; but, partly because of the new emphasis laid on trench-warfare by Liman von Sanders, and partly because of some fine work by the German *Asia Corps*, their attacks were repelled with considerable loss.

In the Jordan area, the Turks made fierce attacks against Ghoraniye bridge-head and against some important ground on the northern flank; but they were defeated with comparative ease by the Australians.

Then, after our withdrawal from Amman, they assembled a considerable body of troops opposite Ghoraniye at Shunet Nimrin. This detachment appeared to be so isolated as to be open to capture. Moreover, an important Arab tribe urged the attempt, and offered to co-operate from the south-east. Allenby therefore decided to undertake a raid which would "cut off and destroy the enemy's force . . . and, if successful, hold Es Salt till the Arabs could advance and relieve" his troops. He also hoped by this plan to deny to the Turks the rich harvests of Moab.

The operation was entrusted to Chauvel, and he was given the Desert Mounted Corps, most of the 60th Division, and the 20th Indian Brigade. His plan was to envelop the Turkish right flank with his infantry, while the Australian Mounted Division pushed rapidly north on the east of the river, dropping detachments to prevent reinforcements from crossing from the west bank, and, then, swinging round, approached Es Salt from the north and north-west. The town was to be secured from attack from the east, and a strong detachment sent down the main road to take the Turkish position at Shunet Nimrin in rear.

At the Bridge of Ed Damiye

The Australians moved off after dark on April 29th, and at dawn on the 30th were well up the Jordan valley. Coming under the fire, first of Turkish posts, then of guns, they opened out until they covered the low ground, and their pace grew faster and faster. The bridge at Ed Damiye was, however, found to be held, and enemy infantry and cavalry were seen moving down to and across it in superior numbers.

Grant, with the 4th L.H. Brigade, supported by three batteries, had orders to cover the 3rd L.H. Brigade, in its move on Es Salt, against an attack from Ed Damiye. He found that the Turks had

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, p. 198.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[3] *Official History, Egypt and Palestine*, i, p. 347.

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, p. 191.

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Photo: Dudley Glanfield.

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ALLENBY

Field-Marshal the Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and of Felixstowe, first gained distinction as a column commander in the Boer War. The outbreak of the Great War found him Inspector-General of Cavalry, and it was as a cavalry leader in France that he laid the foundations of his brilliant reputation. After being in command of the Third Army, he went to Palestine and took over from Sir Archibald Murray in June, 1917; and thereafter his career was a succession of successes. Unquestionably paramount among his triumphs was the astonishing Battle of Megiddo (September 19th, 1918), which not only ruined irreparably Turkey's prospects in the War, but was, viewed as a battle, one of the most decisive ever fought.

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Nevertheless, Allenby continued his pressure. Early in April, in the coastal sector, the 54th, 75th, and 7th (Indian) Divisions attempted an advance; but, partly because of the new emphasis laid on trench-warfare by Liman von Sanders, and partly because of some fine work by the German *Asia Corps*, their attacks were repelled with considerable loss.

In the Jordan area, the Turks made fierce attacks against Ghoraniye bridge-head and against some important ground on the northern flank; but they were defeated with comparative ease by the Australians.

Then, after our withdrawal from Amman, they assembled a considerable body of troops opposite Ghoraniye at Shunet Nimrin. This detachment appeared to be so isolated as to be open to capture. Moreover, an important Arab tribe urged the attempt, and offered to co-operate from the south-east. Allenby therefore decided to undertake a raid which would "cut off and destroy the enemy's force . . . and, if successful, hold Es Salt till the Arabs could advance and relieve" his troops. He also hoped by this plan to deny to the Turks the rich harvests of Moab.

The operation was entrusted to Chauvel, and he was given the Desert Mounted Corps, most of the 60th Division, and the 20th Indian Brigade. His plan was to envelop the Turkish right flank with his infantry, while the Australian Mounted Division pushed rapidly north on the east of the river, dropping detachments to prevent reinforcements from crossing from the west bank, and, then, swinging round, approached Es Salt from the north and north-west. The town was to be secured from attack from the east, and a strong detachment sent down the main road to take the Turkish position at Shunet Nimrin in rear.

At the Bridge of Ed Damiye

The Australians moved off after dark on April 29th, and at dawn on the 30th were well up the Jordan valley. Coming under the fire, first of Turkish posts, then of guns, they opened out until they covered the low ground, and their pace grew faster and faster. The bridge at Ed Damiye was, however, found to be held, and enemy infantry and cavalry were seen moving down to and across it in superior numbers.

Grant, with the 4th L.H. Brigade, supported by three batteries, had orders to cover the 3rd L.H. Brigade, in its move on Es Salt, against an attack from Ed Damiye. He found that the Turks had

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, p. 198.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[3] *Official History, Egypt and Palestine*, i, p. 347.

[1] *The Fighting Cameliers*, p. 191.

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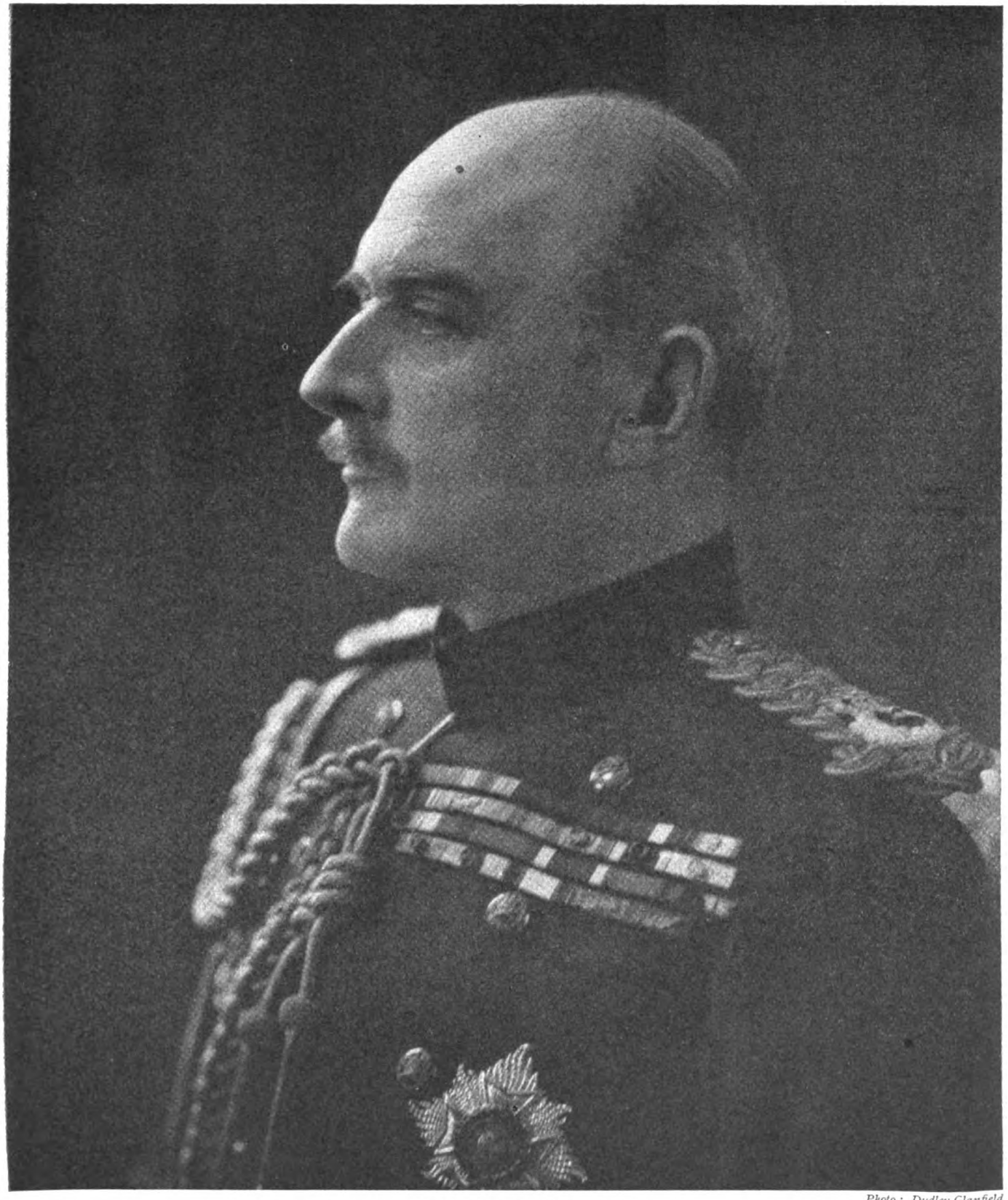

Photo: Dudley Glanfield.

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ALLENBY

Field-Marshal the Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and of Felixstowe, first gained distinction as a column commander in the Boer War. The outbreak of the Great War found him Inspector-General of Cavalry, and it was as a cavalry leader in France that he laid the foundations of his brilliant reputation. After being in command of the Third Army, he went to Palestine and took over from Sir Archibald Murray in June, 1917; and thereafter his career was a succession of successes. Unquestionably paramount among his triumphs was the astonishing Battle of Megiddo (September 19th, 1918), which not only ruined irreparably Turkey's prospects in the War, but was, viewed as a battle, one of the most decisive ever fought.

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built a pontoon bridge at Mafid Jozele, where they might take him in flank and rear, that there was a gap of four miles between him and a squadron he had left on Red Hill—a dominating feature in the valley ; and that the Cameliers, from whom he had expected support, were held up far to the south on the west bank. He signalled for at least another regiment to protect his own line of retreat, but his request was refused.

The situation of the infantry was not much better. Amidst a tangled mass of pinnacles and deep ravines, they had been assailing the Nimrin position since 3 a.m., and by nightfall had met with no appreciable success.

Meanwhile, the 3rd L.H. Brigade (Wilson) and the 5th Mounted Brigade (Kelly) had been scrambling slowly up the steep and rugged tracks leading to the plateau. Wilson, covered by the guns of the " Bing Boys " and handling his brigade in masterly fashion, attacked and defeated the covering troops and galloped into Es Salt.

A subaltern — Foulkes-Taylor — led. Having exhausted his ammunition, he dashed at a German staff officer, forced him to surrender, seized his revolver, and then, charging with a much-reduced troop along the road to Amman, captured 200 Turks and much material. Among the booty were 28 new machine guns in their packing-cases. The corps commander escaped by a narrow margin.

On May 1st, the infantry, for all its gallant efforts, failed again. Early that day the situation on the British left became decidedly dangerous. The Turks poured over both their bridges. They swept the squadron from Red Hill, and pressed Grant right back through his guns. One battery got three of its guns away, but, cut off from the only passable track, the others, nine in number, had to be abandoned—the only guns lost in the whole campaign in Palestine.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

ENTERING NABLUS

Troopers of the 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade entering Nablus on September 21st, 1918. This place, also known by its Biblical name of Shechem, stands 28 miles north of Jerusalem, and was fortified as a military base by the Turks. Fighting occurred in the area between the two towns from December, 1917, until almost the end of the campaign.

Australians Avert Disaster

The Turks, continuing their pressure down the valley, were rendering the position of the 4th Brigade and of the troops whose communications it was covering more and more perilous. Only the steadiness of the Australian troopers prevented a disaster. Even during this hour of trial they fulfilled the honoured ritual of saving their wounded, though often at high cost.

Hodgson, with his headquarters and his other brigade, had now reached Es Salt, completely ignorant of the happenings in the valley. He sent Kelly with the 5th Brigade down the main road against Shunet Nimrin. The Turks, however, were found to be barring the way in an impregnable position. The manœuvre which proved so successful in the last three battles in Mesopotamia failed here, because the frontal attack failed. The two mounted brigades could have prevented the retreat of the enemy, but their attacking-power was not sufficiently high to enable them to fall effectively upon his rear.

At 4.40 p.m., Hodgson, though he was now being attacked from several directions, and though the Arabs had failed to put in an appearance, was still con-

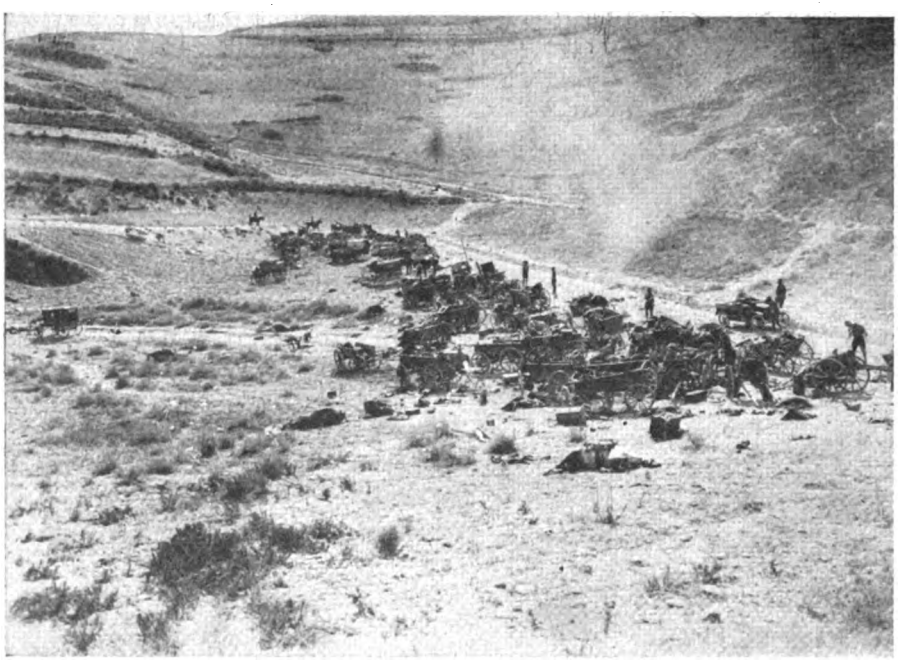

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

WRECKED TRANSPORT

A mass of Turkish transport waggons, and a water-cart or two, destroyed by British aircraft as the Turks travelled along the road from Nablus to Beisan during the great retreat following Megiddo. This photograph was taken on September 20th, 1918.

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The IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

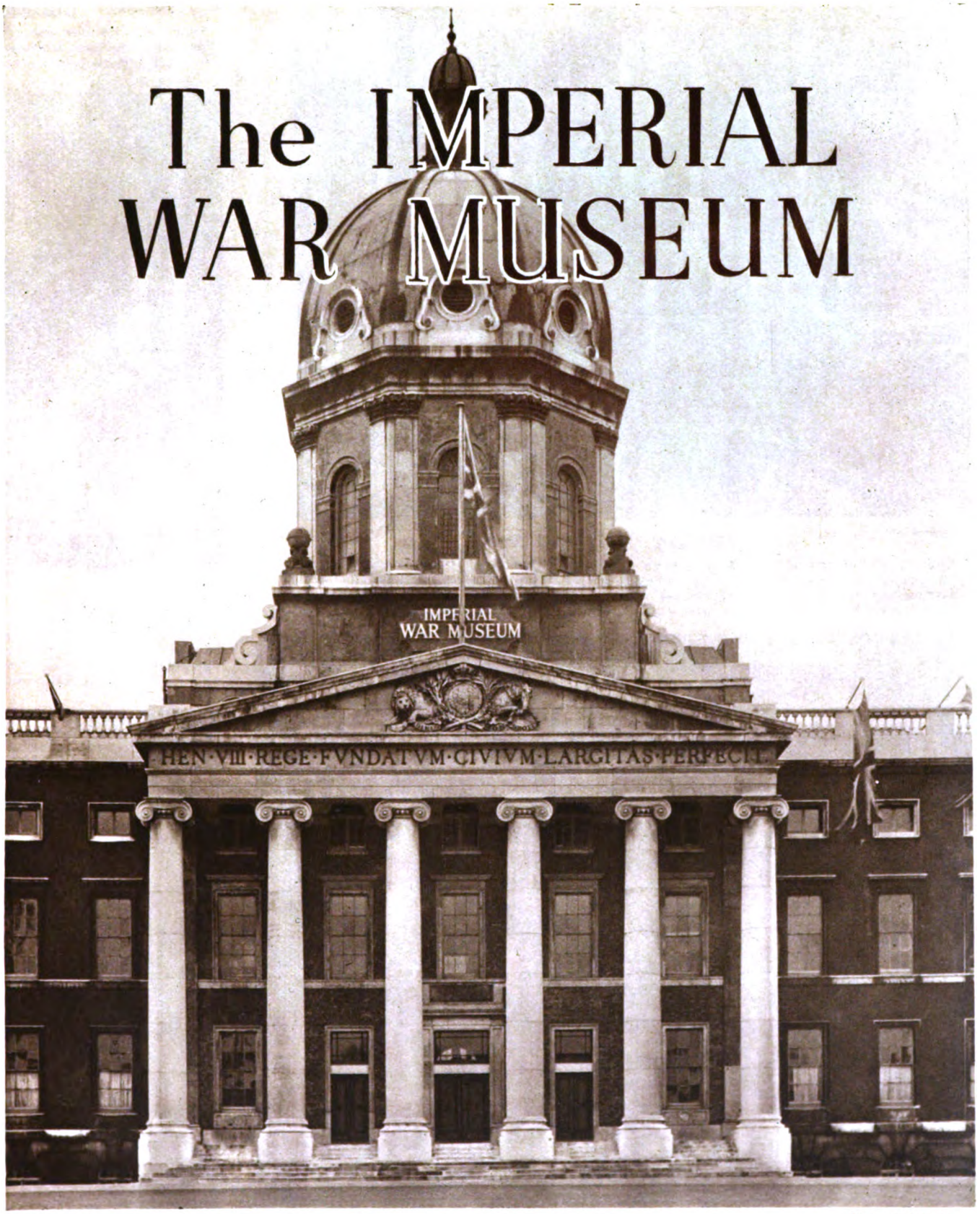

Photo: A. J. Insall

THE EXTERIOR OF THE MUSEUM

The Imperial War Museum, now permanently housed in the Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, Lambeth Road, London, S.E.1, was originally accommodated in the Crystal Palace, where it occupied practically all the immense floor-space. Many of the exhibits were disposed of when the museum moved to South Kensington, but some of them were returned when it was transferred to Lambeth in 1935. It now possesses relics of all branches of the Empire's War services, and also a number acquired from our Allies.

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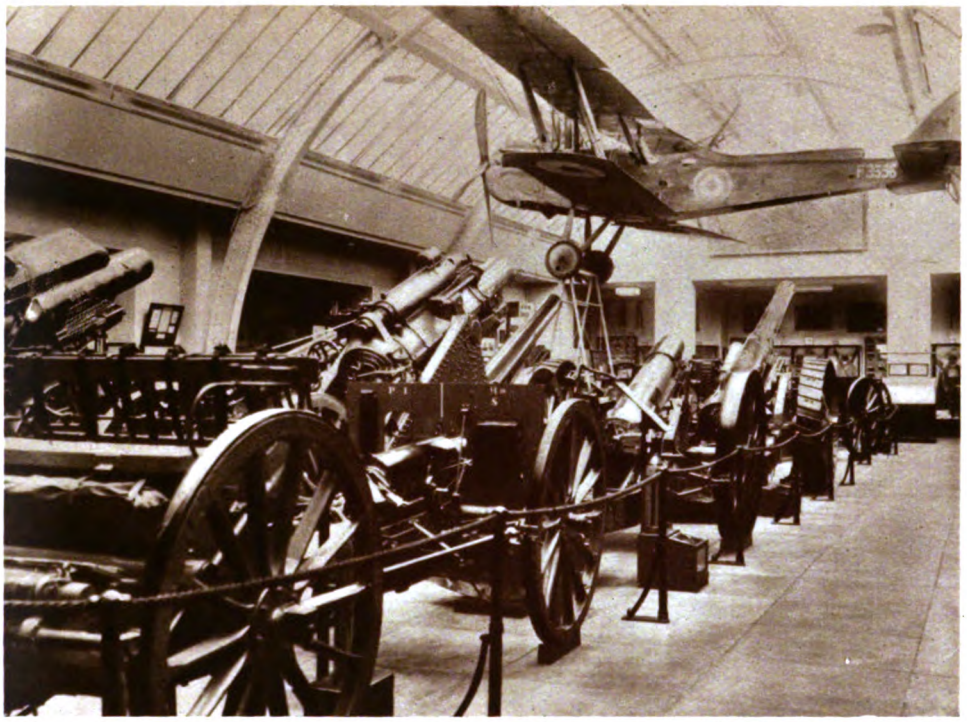

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE PRINCIPAL ARMY GALLERY

A general view of the gallery, showing some of the guns and one of the aeroplanes on exhibition. The aircraft is a specimen of the R.E.8, the general-purpose Army artillery observation and reconnaissance machine used chiefly during the later stages of the War. Behind its fuselage may be seen one of four ornamental friezes in bas-relief by C. S. Jagger.

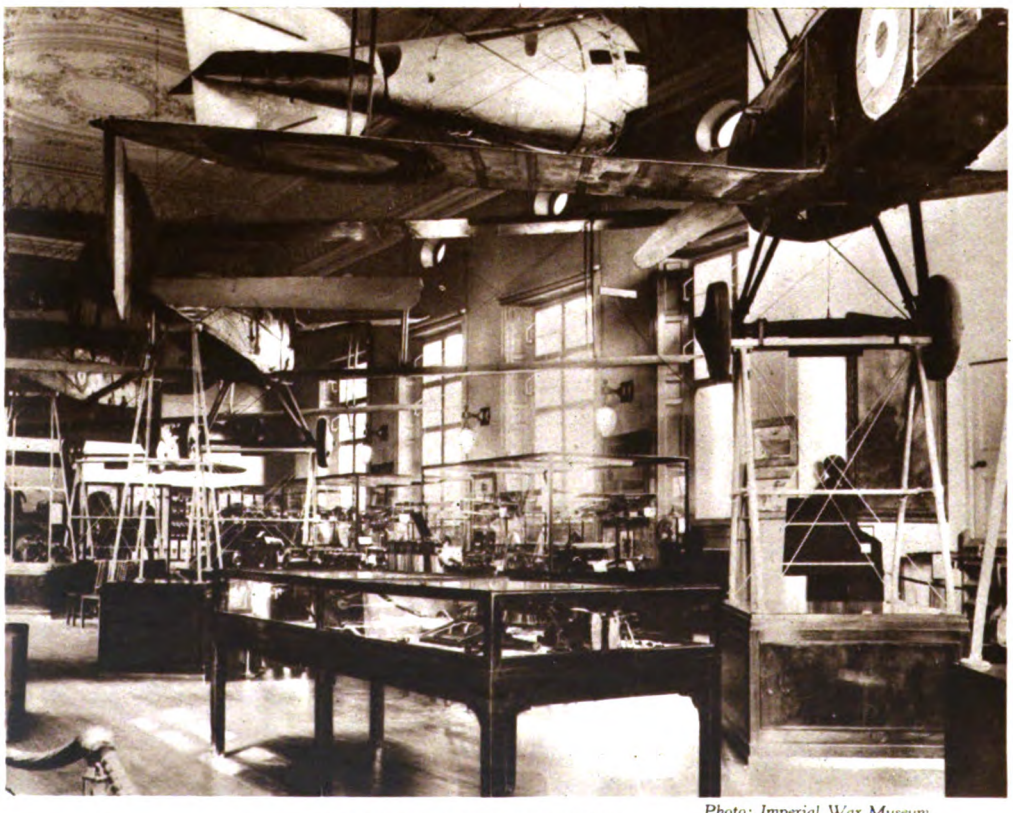

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE AIR SERVICES ROOM

In the top right-hand corner appears the Sopwith "Camel" in which Lieut. S. D. Culley, R.A.F., was flying when he destroyed the Zeppelin *L*53 at 19,000 feet, north of Ameland Island, August 11th, 1918. Beyond, the bomb-shaped object is an observation car shed by a raiding Zeppelin in 1916. The glass cases contain models, and relics such as fragments of von Richthofen's machine.

THE ARMY GALLE

What may be called a worm's-eye view o
ground. The guns are, from left to right
a British 60-pounder heavy field gun o

THE

This particular view has been taken look
Reading Room, where almost any doc
indirectly to the Great War, may be cons
and similar journals, and of original docu
a large collection of file copies

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ANOTHER PEEP

ng another Jagger frieze in the back-itish 9.2-inch Mark I heavy howitzer; German 21 cm. (8.3-inch) mortar.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

RY

n the corridor leading to the visitors' ever published, relating directly or Many examples of trench, regimental, are here carefully preserved, as is also r-time newspapers.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

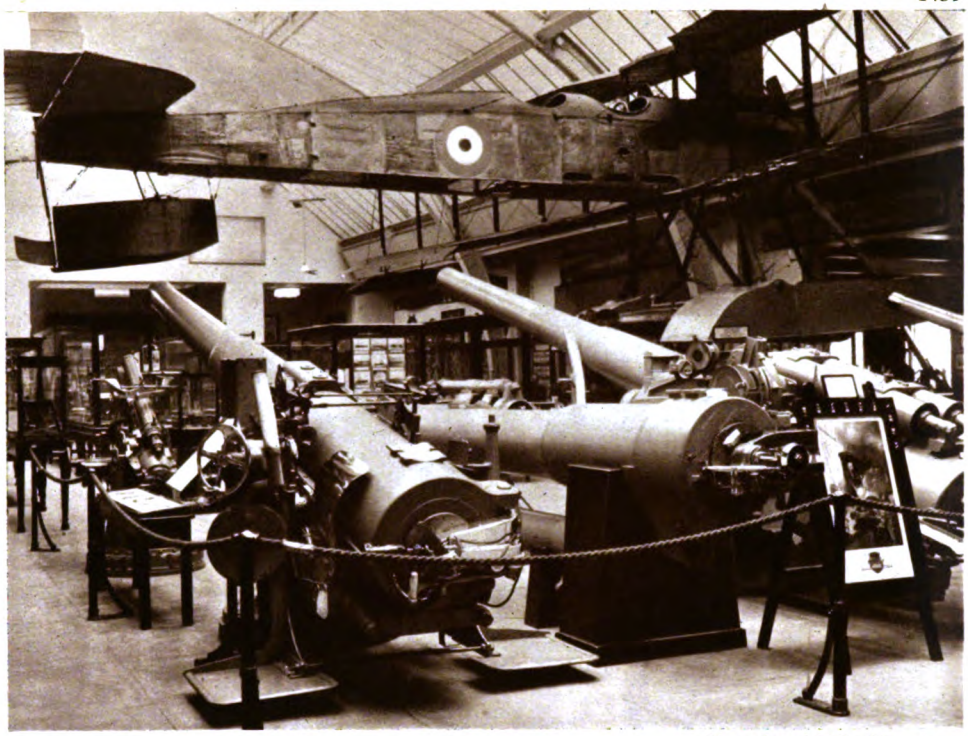

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE NAVAL GALLERY

One of the chief exhibits here is the gun worked by Boy Cornwell, V.C., on board H.M.S. *Chester* at Jutland. Readers may recognize the picture on the easel for that reproduced on page 707 of TWENTY YEARS AFTER. Above the guns is another Jutland relic, the Short seaplane which flew there. This is preserved as far as possible in its war-time condition.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

THE WOMEN'S WORK SECTION

The main interest of this gallery probably lies in the excellent scale-models of various War activities in which women engaged themselves. Other features, as may be seen on the right of the photograph, include uniforms of the women's services. Toward the left appears, in profile, a bust of Nurse Cavell—probably the most famous, and certainly one of the noblest, women of the War era.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum

IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS SECTION

Part of the gallery of this section, to which readers of TWENTY YEARS AFTER should by now have fully discovered their indebtedness. Approximately half-a-million photographs are filed away here, but of course only a small number can be set on exhibition. These, however, provide a selection of pictorial records pertaining to almost every front and every sphere of activity, on land or sea or in the air. It may be observed here that a feature of the museum in general is the way in which the exhibits are, wherever possible, accompanied by photographs showing them in use.

Photo: Imperial War Museum

PART OF THE ORPEN GALLERY

More than one example of Sir William Orpen's work has appeared in our publication, and its excellence is so widely known and justly appreciated that the devotion of a special room to it at the Imperial War Museum is but a fitting tribute. Orpen's treatment of flesh is as perfect as his treatment of landscape, and this gallery deserves many visits, for it provides a splendid, almost essential,complement to the photographic section.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF SHARON

The Battle of Sharon, a sequel to the Battle of Megiddo, was fought on September 19th, 1918, and increased the rout of the Turks. In this photograph we see the 181st Brigade, 60th Division, escorting from Kerkur to Tul Karm some of the 1,200 prisoners taken by the Desert Mounted Corps in the engagement. The date of the illustration is September 22nd.

centrating his efforts on the destruction of the main Turkish force. He continued to do so even after he had learnt of the catastrophe in the valley, in the hope of assisting the infantry in the assault which it was to make during the early hours of the 2nd.

The Londoners, faced with an impossible task, were fighting for the third day in succession with unabated courage, and at one moment came within an ace of victory. Here is an instance of their bravery. A platoon which had captured an isolated post was being pounded by machine-gun fire and had been reduced from 30 men to nine. The lance-corporal in charge called for a volunteer to carry through a message. Private Cruickshank undertook the seemingly hopeless task. He was knocked over at once, hit in the arm and thigh. Getting up, he was hit by six more bullets, and, seeing that it was useless to attempt to rise again, started rolling. Under fire all the time, he rolled down into a wadi and then fortunately fell among other wounded men, sheltering behind a rock. He survived, and was awarded a V.C.

A Brilliant Counter-stroke

Hodgson's further efforts at breaking the hostile resistance proved unavailing; but his situation was relieved somewhat by a brilliant counter-stroke. Major Walker, with a single squadron of the 5th A.L.H., having repulsed a body of Turks, sent a troop to turn their left flank, and with three troops carried out a frontal assault, capturing no less than 319 prisoners—a fine example, like that set by Colonel Bell near the same spot, of the offensive spirit burning fiercely in the face of disaster.

Early on the 3rd, Shea attacked again—not with any expectation of success, but in order to pin the Turks and thus help to extricate the mounted troops. At the same time, the valley troops, in spite of the onrush of picked German and Turkish companies, stuck doggedly to their task of covering the last exit from Es Salt. These joint efforts produced the desired result, enabling Hodgson to withdraw his brigades with all their transport and prisoners, the latter for the whole force numbering nearly 1,000.

Thus ended one of the toughest combats of the campaign. The enemy was lucky, in that a division of picked and specially-trained troops, when on the way to attack our line, found itself ideally placed to strike the flank of the Australians. The Turks and their German associates fought most valiantly to draw profit from this favour of fortune.

The raid on Es Salt was the third successive stroke of ours that had failed. Yet the spirit of the troops, and their confidence in their leaders, remained unimpaired. And the attention of the Turks was now firmly riveted to their left flank; for it seemed to them certain that Allenby's determined efforts eastward were the preliminaries to an advance up the Jordan valley, with the object of rounding up the whole Turkish Army by seizing its communications at Dera'a.

When, on the Western Front, the Germans launched their second great assault and seriously threatened the

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A SCENE IN HAIFA

Indian cavalry passing through the streets of this important coast-town upon its occupation by the Allies, September 23rd, 1918. Haifa was captured by the Jodhpore and Mysore Lancers of the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade. Note the civilians' European dress.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A TRENCH NEAR MONTBRÉHAIN

Montbréhain stands at the meeting of many ways, 18 km. north-north-east of St. Quentin. The principal of those ways connect it with Bohain, 7 km. to the north-east, Roisel and Péronne, to the west, Le Cateau, again to the north-east, Fresnoy-le-Grand, to the south-east, and finally St. Quentin itself. Our photograph was taken on October 7th, 1918, after the 24th Australian Battalion had advanced across the area shown. The trench was originally filled with German dead.

Channel Ports, further calls were made on Palestine. In all, Allenby had to despatch to France two divisions, nine yeomanry regiments, five-and-a-half siege batteries, twenty-five infantry battalions, and five machine-gun battalions —in all, 60,000 officers and men.

The Empire's Resources

"Yet even more remarkable to contemplate than the extent of this invaluable aid to the Armies on the Western Front is the magnitude of the Empire's resources, which permitted him to retain in these months of adversity an Army of four mounted and seven infantry divisions, fully equipped with all the material needful."[1]

These changes entailed an immense amount of reorganisation and training. In general, except in the Anzac divisions, three Indian units were brigaded with one British. The Anzac companies of the Cameliers were converted into Light Horse regiments; and the Desert Mounted Corps, re-shaped, then contained the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions—all British or Indian units—and the Australian and Anzac Mounted Divisions—all (with the exception of one French regiment) either Australians or New Zealanders, and now for the first time equipped with swords.

Owing to the necessity for retaining a bridge-head over the Jordan in order to protect our right flank and to continue that threat against the Hedjaz railway which was vital to future plans, a strong force had to be maintained throughout the summer in the Jordan valley, one of the hottest and most pestilential districts in the world.

"For weeks at a stretch the shade temperature was rarely below 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and occasionally rose to 125 degrees. Had the air been light, the heat alone would have been a menace to health. But the southern end of the great gorge lies 1,290 feet below sea-level and 4,000 feet below the mountains overshadowing it on either side. Blinded and choked by the dust, with rifles and tools almost too hot to touch, harassed by flies and mosquitoes and a strange plague of stinging scorpions, great black spiders, snakes, and other venomous creatures insect or reptile, which seemed in keeping with that infernal region, the troops were weighed down with a sense of physical oppression due to the abnormal weight of atmosphere and its excessive moisture. Rations reached the lines in regular supply, but in a condition which would have revolted any men but soldiers on active service."[1]

At first the garrison of this dreadful

[1] *Official History*, p. 421.

[1] *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 642.

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area was furnished mainly by Australians, as all other units were being reconstituted. During this period ,the enemy made a fierce attack on the salient at Abu Tulul. They were repulsed, losing 448 prisoners, of whom 377 were Germans.

Isolated Posts

Amid much epic fighting, the resolute defence of two isolated posts may be cited. Lieutenant King fought until he was killed and all his men had been killed or wounded. Lieutenant Henderson, though severely wounded, directed the fight till its close, and, with his band of heroes reduced to three, kept the enemy at bay.

Granville, with the reserve regiment, closed up and waited for Cox's word. At the right moment it came : " Get to them, Granny ! " and the squadrons went in. The men climbed the hill, and then, with an eager shout, charged down on their foes and routed them. At the same time and near at hand, the Indian cavalrymen had their first brush. Riding straight and hard, they captured 86 prisoners.

The state of training of the troops was tested during the summer by a series of raids conducted by forces ranging from platoons to brigades. The biggest of these was executed by the 29th Brigade on the night of August 12th. The operation had been rehearsed in detail behind the line, and the most careful preparations made : special ladders built, felt soles supplied for boots, routes marked by tapes and luminous boards, and flank demonstrations organised.

The objective was a ridge 4,000 yards long, running east and west, held by 600 Turks of good quality. To the south-east deployed the 54th Sikhs and two companies 1st Leinsters ; to the west, the 1/101st Grenadiers and the other two companies of the Leinsters. The two Indian battalions dashed forward simultaneously, and captured the flanking works. Pivoting on these, the Leinster groups wheeled inwards, covered by a barrage, against the central works. There was some tough fighting, but the raid was successful, 139 men and 14 machine guns being captured at a cost of 107 casualties.

For the far-reaching plans that were germinating in Allenby's mind, improvement of supply was as important as reorganisation and training. Work in the back areas was therefore maintained at full blast. The railway through Sinai was doubled to Rafah, that from Ludd to Jerusalem was enlarged to broad-gauge, and numerous light railways and roads were constructed. Thus the transport capacity

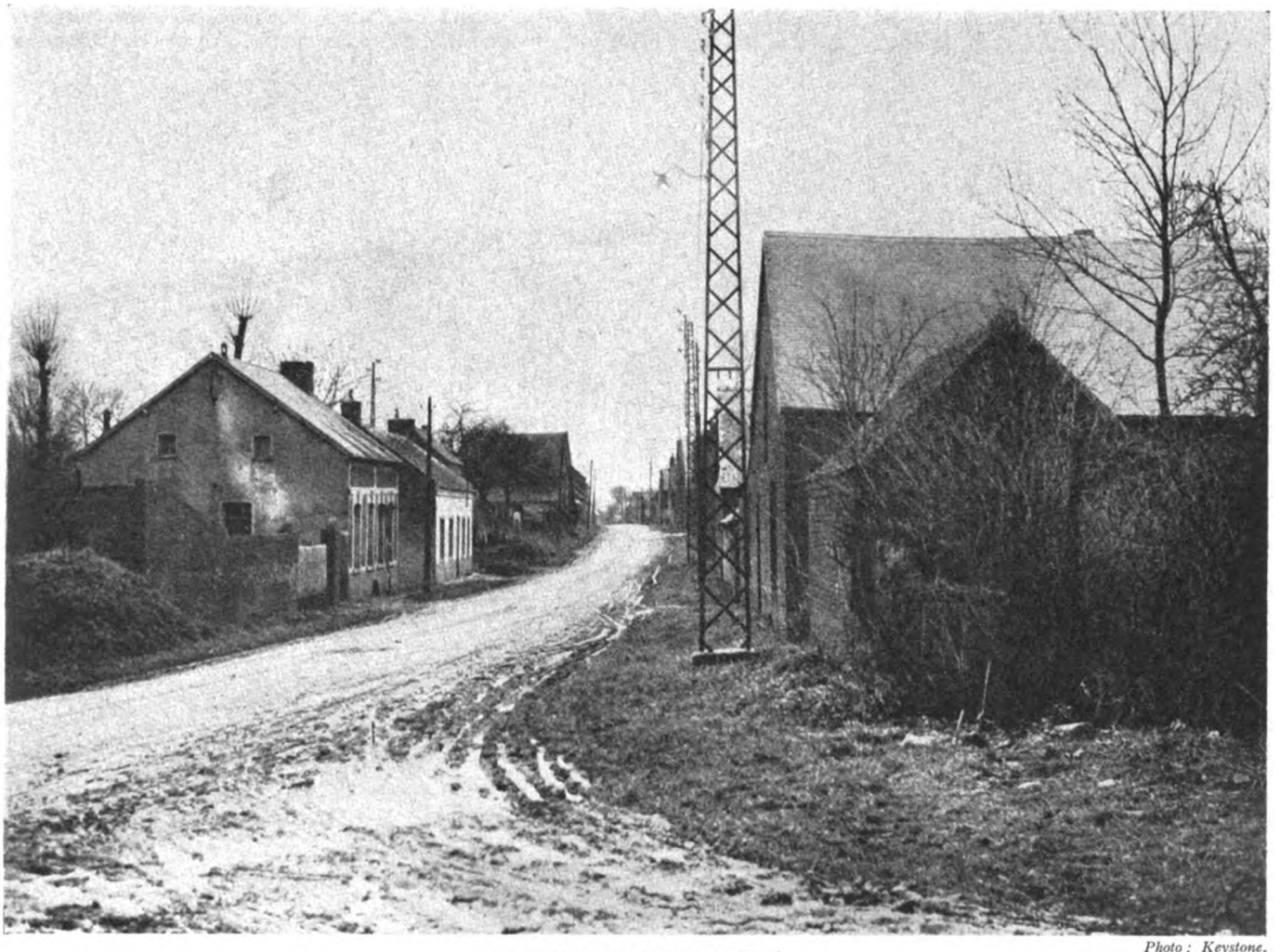

Photo : Keystone.

NO LONGER DEATH-HAUNTED

The final capture of Montbréhain in 1918 was unusual, for it happened—so to speak—twice. Three battalions of Sherwood Foresters (46th Division) took the place on October 3rd, only to lose it soon afterwards ; and it was retaken by the 21st and 24th Australian Battalions two days later. Montbréhain is not among the tiniest battlefield villages, for its present population is given as over 1,200. The two small British cemeteries contain respectively 48 Australian, 20 United Kingdom and 3 Australian, 86 United Kingdom fallen.

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grew hourly. In the month of June alone the Palestine railways carried goods weighing 168,000 tons.

Immense Civil Improvements

The civil administration of occupied territory kept pace with other progress. "Where there had been Eastern sloth, filth, and corruption, there was now British efficiency driven by the dreaded personality of General Allenby and by British justice, which operating impartially and cleanly between natives of many faiths and races, moved the wonder and even tickled the humour of the incredulous inhabitants. Within a few weeks of its occupation, Jerusalem was transformed from the most unsavoury city in the world into a clean and fragrant town." [1]

On the 22nd August, Allenby explained his plans for the great battle to the senior commanders. The XXI Corps, with its left on the coast, was to deliver the decisive attack. After smashing the Turkish front, it was to wheel right and open a way for the cavalry. It was then to advance east and north-east. The XX Corps, containing only two divisions distributed over a wide front, was to move north on Nablus, but only when the main attack was well under way. The Desert Mounted Corps was to advance through the gap made by the XXI Corps, strike rapidly northward over the Plain of Sharon, cross the Samarian Hills to the Plain of Esdraelon, move on El Affule and Beisan—two of the three vital points on the Turkish communications—and block retreat to the north and north-east.

The third vital point—Dera'a—where the pilgrim railway from Damascus, supplying the garrison of Medina and the *Fourth Army*, joined the line to Gaza which supplied the *Seventh* and *Eighth Armies*, was to be dealt with by the Arab Army. In the Jordan valley, Chaytor, with a mixed force, would protect the right flank and prevent the enemy from sending reinforcements from east to west.

The bulk of the artillery—384 guns—was to support the XXI Corps, the greater part near the coast. The XX Corps and Chaytor would have 130 and 38 guns respectively.

The two principal difficulties to be overcome were, firstly, to effect in secrecy the great concentration towards the coast, and, secondly, to supply the troops with water, food, and ammunition in their rapid advance.

In the latter respect, our previous experience in provisioning by land and sea, by camel, donkey, cart, train, and lorry, would stand us in good stead. Moreover, neither food nor water was quite so scarce in the country to be traversed as in southern Palestine.

A Model for All Time

The arrangements regarding secrecy were so perfect as to furnish a model for all time. The preparations were kept in very few hands, brigade and battalion

[1] *Australian Official History*, vii, p. 647.

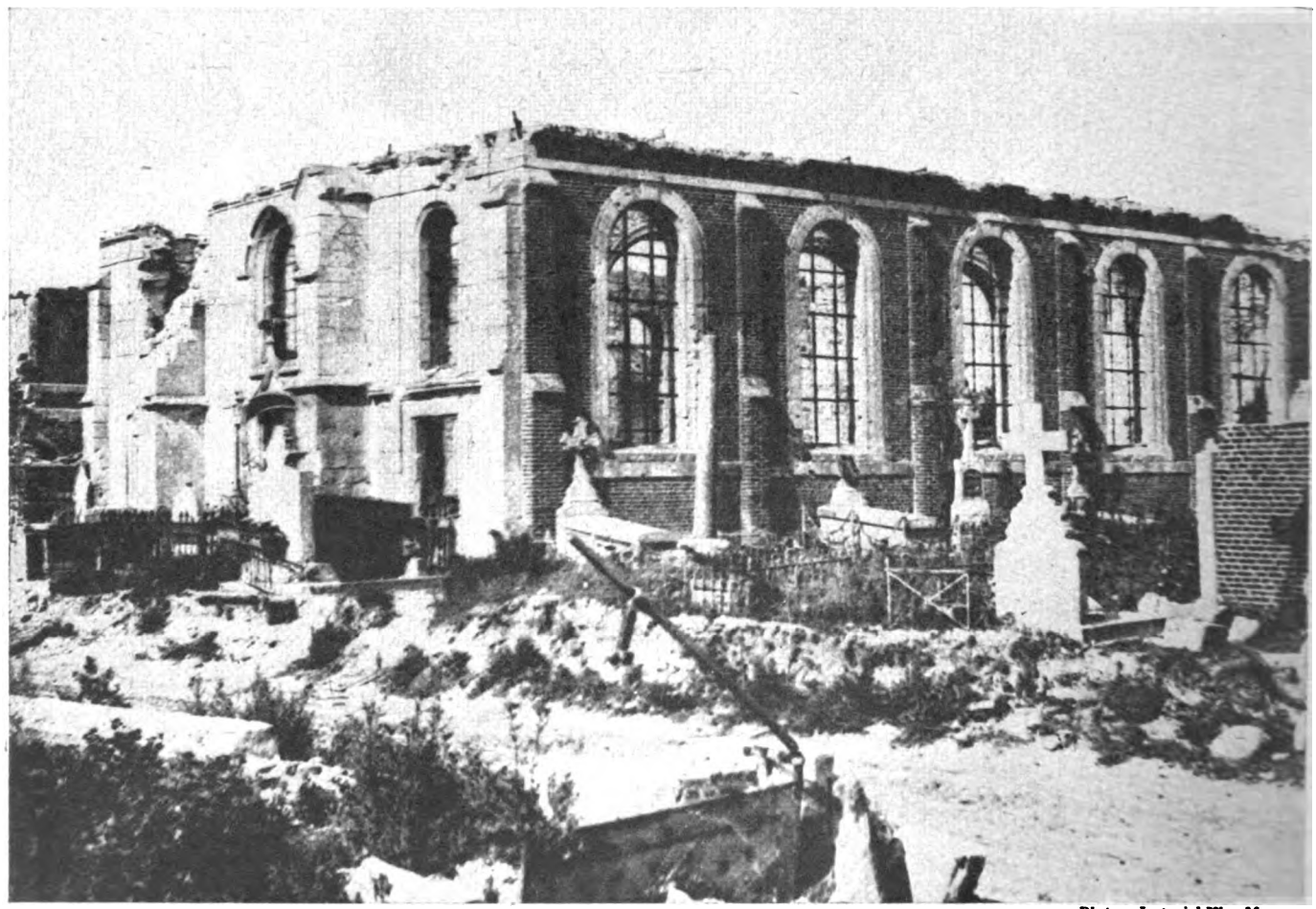

Photo: Imperial War Museum

CHAMPIEN'S PRINCELY FANE

For a village whose inhabitants number less than 250, Champien before the War could boast a very fine church indeed; and, as the modern picture suggests, the new building is largely a replica of the old. The situation of the village is close to that of Carrépuis, Champien being 3 km. south-east of the latter, on the road from Roye to Ham. The above illustration was taken on August 29th, 1918, during the final Allied advance.

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commanders being acquainted with the plan only when such knowledge was essential for the execution of the parts they had to play. The precautions taken to conceal troop-movements were of the most elaborate nature. In the Jordan valley all tents were left standing, and even additional camps pitched. Elsewhere, no fresh tents were erected; where further accommodation was required and could not be concealed, it was created two months beforehand by the expansion of existing camps.

When the Desert Mounted Corps marched to the coast, 15,000 dummies took the place of its horses. Its headquarters, "in view from the hills in the enemy's lines, remained standing for a fortnight after the Corps staff had departed to the coast. It was lit up every night, and the wireless traffic to and from it continued with normal regularity, as though the Corps were still in the valley."[1]

The principal hotel in Jerusalem was commandeered for G.H.Q., and extensive provision made in it for accommodation and for signal communication. A race-meeting was advertised in Jaffa for the 19th September. All moves westwards were made by night, and those eastwards by day. Some units marched east by day and were lorried back by night. In the great orange-groves near the coast the cavalry horses were effectively concealed, and could water unseen from irrigation streams.

In bivouacs known to the enemy, there was no restriction of movement. In concealed bivouacs no fires were lit, and no movement was permitted during daylight. None of these precautions would, however, have availed had not British aircraft been completely in the ascendant in July and August. The R.A.F. was superior to its opponents not only in numbers, but, what is more important, in the quality of its machines.

The net result of all these devices, combined with the raids on Amman and Es Salt and the retention of large forces in Jordan valley, was that the Turks and the Germans fully expected that the attack would come by the Jordan valley, and were completely surprised when the main blow fell near the coast.

How the Troops Lay

In the XXI Corps, the distribution of the divisions from right to left was: 54th, 3rd (Indian), 75th, 7th (Indian), and 60th. On the front of the XX Corps there were only the 53rd and the 10th Divisions. Behind the 7th and 60th Divisions was the Desert Mounted Corps, on the right was the 4th Cavalry Division, on the left the 5th, and in reserve the Australian Mounted Division, of which the 5th L.H. Brigade was attached to the 60th Division.

On his left, Allenby had assembled 9,000 sabres, 35,000 bayonets, and 384 guns, against 1,200 sabres, 8,000 bayonets, and 113 guns. He had converted a superiority of 2½ to 1 in the whole theatre to one of 5 to 1 in the decisive area.

Chaytor had at his disposal, apart from his own Anzac Division, the 20th Indian Brigade, which was holding the Ghoranye bridge-head, some Imperial Service troops, and, quite untried, two Jewish and two West Indian battalions.

On the 16th and 17th, the R.A.F. bombed Dera'a, and the Arab Army began cutting the railway north, south, and west of that junction. On the 18th, the stage was set for one of the greatest triumphs in military history. The only serious fear was that the enemy might make a partial withdrawal prior to the bombardment.

At 4.30 a.m., on the 19th September, the guns opened fire, and, simultaneously, the infantry advanced. The

[1] Bowman-Manifold, *The Egyptian and Palestine Campaigns*, p. 78.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

CHILDREN BEGGING

The chief characteristic of modern Champien seems to be the begging-propensities of its children, which our photographer found developed to an almost Oriental degree. There is little to relate of the village, save that in March, 1918, it shared much the same fortunes as its neighbour Carrépuis. At 7 p.m. on the 25th General Robillot ordered his two French divisions (the 22nd and 62nd) to retire on a line running through the Bois de Champien. The enemy followed up this retirement, and emerged from the wood, opposite the village, at 3 a.m. on the 26th.

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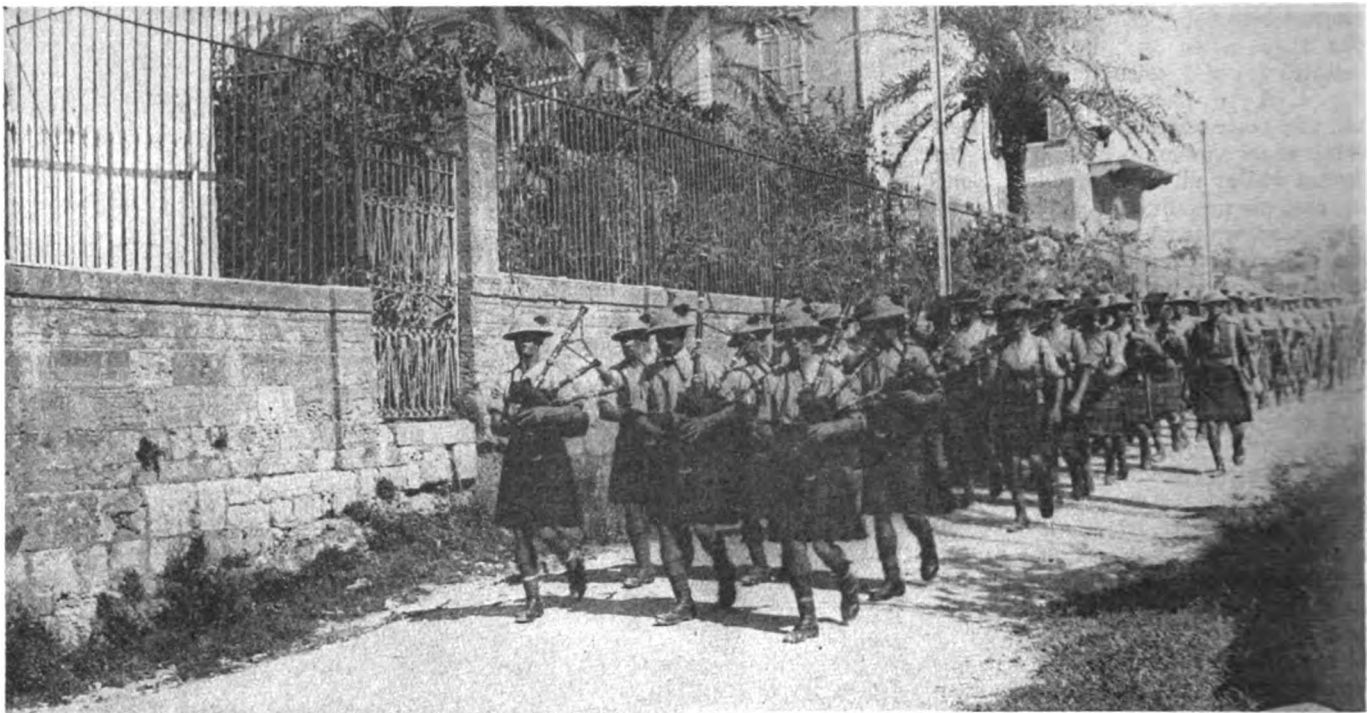

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

SCOTSMEN AT BEIRUT

The 2nd Battalion of the Black Watch (7th Meerut Division)—wearing their kilts this time—headed by their pipers as they march triumphantly through Beirut on October 10th, 1918. This town, about 60 miles by rail north-west of Damascus, is the chief seaport of Syria, and a busy commercial centre.

IN THE BARADA GORGE

A scene during the operations for the capture of Damascus : the Beirut road in the Barada Gorge is blocked by the fire of the 3rd and 5th Brigade Australian L.H. and of French cavalry units, 30th September, 1918. 370 dead, 8 guns, and 30 machine guns were found in the wreckage.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

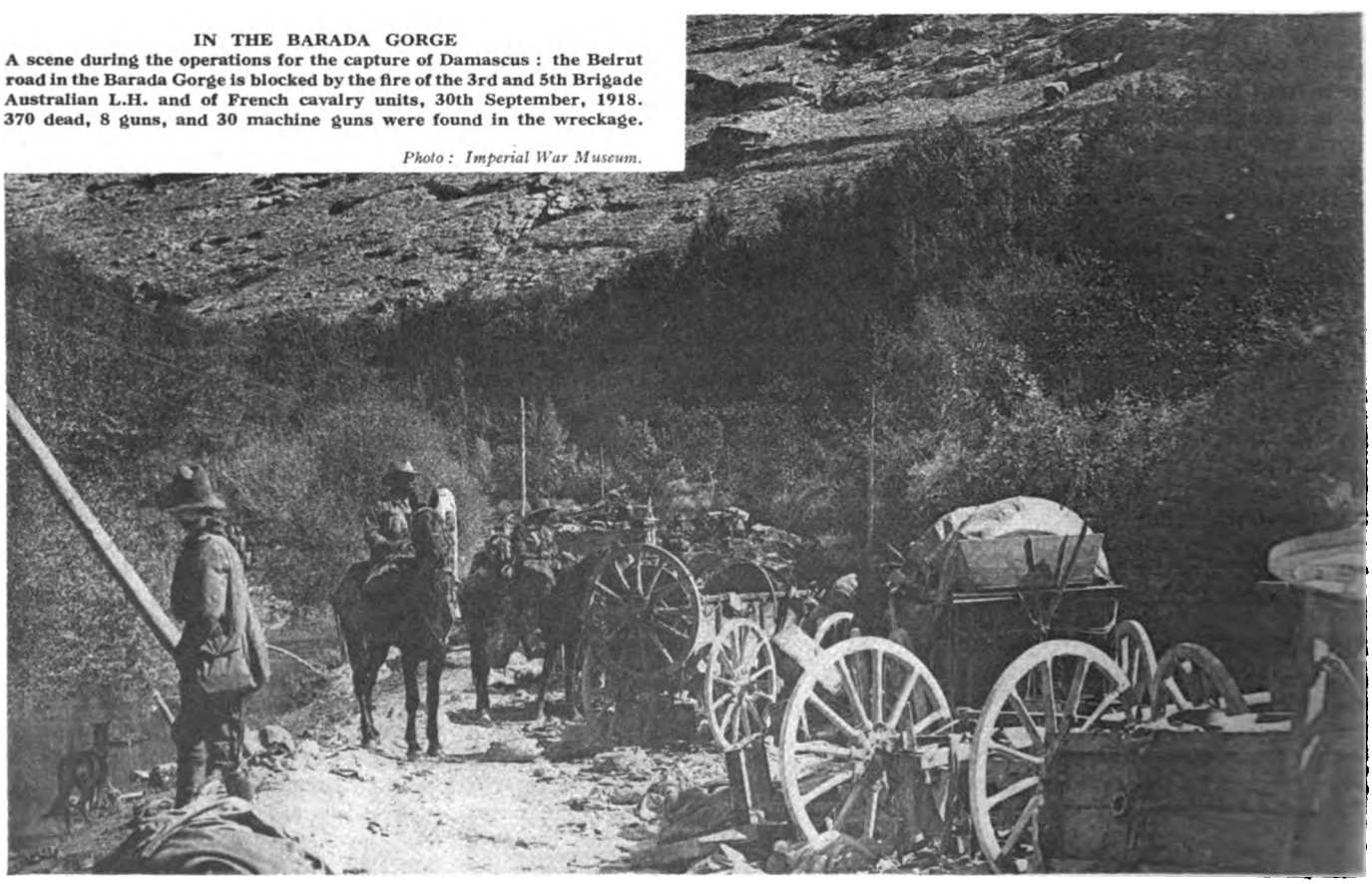

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

LAWRENCE AND HIS BODYGUARD

Colonel Lawrence and some of his bodyguard at Aqaba in the summer of 1918. The Arabs' capture of this place under Lawrence's generalship was a brilliant feat, and a foretaste of the leadership which was to carry this strangest of all the War armies into Damascus itself before the conflict was over.

AN ARAB PATROL

Exigencies of space have caused a good deal less than justice to be done, in the accompanying chapter, to Lawrence's campaign, the whole astonishing course of which has had to be dismissed in a few brief allusions. Below, an Arab patrol, led by Ga'afar's A.D.C., and flying the Sherifian flag, marches across the desert.

Photo : Imperial War Museum.

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

THE ADVANCE TO DAMASCUS

A photograph of Jisr Benat Yakub—the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob—two or three miles south of Lake Huleh, which the Australian Mounted Division, on reaching it during September 27th, 1918, found broken by the enemy. On September 28th the 5th Cavalry Division was delayed here, a lorry having fallen through the temporary bridge across the destroyed arch. During the night a squadron of Western Australians drove the Turkish rearguard from the bridge.

barrage was excellent; and, from the weakness of the response it was clear that the counter-battery work was effective.

The 54th Division, and the French detachment serving with it, captured all their objectives with a fine rush, and then stood ready to act as the pivot for the great wheel to the right.

The 3rd Division carried the opposing trenches, and then wheeled eastward—a complicated evolution successfully accomplished by 6 p.m.

The 75th Division was not to take part in the wheel, as it had to tackle the most formidable of the Turkish defences and then go into reserve. The 232nd Brigade, after storming the front line, encountered the most stubborn resistance. A turning movement by armoured cars, however, forced the Turks to retire. The 234th Brigade on the left won its objectives, and with them 10 guns, without serious fighting. The speed of the advance was such that a Turkish corps headquarters was captured, and the corps commander, though he escaped, spent a week wandering behind our lines before he managed to rejoin his army.

An Encounter with Germans

The 7th Division encountered serious opposition only after it had wheeled and was moving east into the foothills. There the 2nd Black Watch and the 92nd Punjabis met German troops, and for the second time that day had to carry out a deliberate attack. On this occasion, a naik and four sepoys of the Punjabis, trying to catch up their battalion after having wounds dressed, suddenly came upon a 5·9-inch battery just about to hook in. The naik at once placed his four men between the teams and the guns, and, dashing off, managed to attract the attention of a company in time to ensure the capture of the battery.

The 60th Division, whose brigades, as with all divisions except the 54th, were now composed of one British and three Indian battalions, was set a tough task. It had to break the hostile line, establish a bridge-head for the cavalry over the River Faliq, wheel, take Tul Karm, and cut the railway east of it—about 16 miles of marching, manœuvring, and fighting on a summer's day. In fulfilling their task, the troops were traversing the area where Richard Cœur de Lion, also in summer, had defeated Saladin after a hotly contested struggle.

Assisted by the fire of the destroyers *Druid* and *Forester*, the leading brigade

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overran the trenches, and, by 7.30 a.m., had passed the cavalry over the Faliq. Shea then ordered the 5th L.H. Brigade to move round Tul Karm and cut the railway east of that town. The light horsemen carried out their task, and rounded up 2,000 Turks driven out of the town by the approach of the 2/22nd London Regiment and by the bombing of our planes.

To summarise—the operation of the XXI Corps had proved completely successful. It had broken through the enemy's trenches and had wheeled to the right, forming a protected alleyway for the advance of the cavalry. It had captured 7,000 prisoners and 100 guns.

The R.A.F. rendered splendid service. It gave Allenby excellent information of the advance, it paralysed the enemy's nerve-centres by continual bombing, and, by attacking troops and transport, not only caused fearful destruction, but also blocked most of the roads.

The XX Corps's Attack

The XX Corps did not attack until 8 p.m. The 53rd Division, which had been fighting the night before in order to win a suitable jumping-off place, advanced, against considerable resistance, for 2 miles. Renewing its advance on the evening of the 20th, it moved 10 miles across the hills, and closed all exits to the Jordan valley. The 10th Division struck only a thin line; for the enemy, hearing of the disaster to the *Eighth Army*, had withdrawn to a second position. In spite of very difficult going, the division pushed on, and though at first supported only by the "Bing Boys," stormed the trenches, the 54th Sikhs and the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles especially distinguishing themselves. The Worcester Yeomanry, coming up at this moment by the main road, captured many prisoners who might have escaped the foot-soldiers.

Even then the tired infantry was not allowed to halt. It was called to make a special effort to reach Nablus, and it nobly responded, though the men were almost dropping from fatigue. Finally, after two days' continuous marching and fighting, it reached a point east of the town and took 1,200 prisoners—a particularly fine performance.

On the 20th and 21st, the XXI Corps advanced slowly through the difficult foothills, and met the XX Corps at Nablus. The two corps between them had then taken about 19,000 prisoners and 290 guns, their own casualties numbering less than 500.

The 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions moved parallel over the Plain of Sharon. The leading brigade of the 4th was beyond the pass of Musmus by 3.30 a.m. on the 20th, but the two rear brigades, misled by a guide, caused a delay of two hours. After that, however, the advance was renewed. The 2nd Lancers in the van soon encountered troops which had been sent to hold the pass. There was no hesitation. While two squadrons held the enemy in front, the other two swung out and charged in flank, killing or capturing the whole battalion. At 8 a.m., the regiment entered El Affule without much resistance, finding there 10 engines, 50 trucks, and 4 aeroplanes.

Blocking the Last Exit

At 1 p.m. the division moved towards Beisan, and reached that town at 6 p.m., having piquetted the whole road from El Affule against stragglers escaping northward. It had now finished its task for the moment. In 34 hours it had covered 70 miles, and yet only its battery horses were seriously distressed. The 19th Lancers, with part of the 4th Field Squadron R.E., marched to the Jisr el Majami during the night, and, after preparing for destruction the bridges over the Jordan and the Yarmuk, sat down to block the last exit from Palestine to the north.

The objective of the 5th Cavalry Division was the headquarters of Liman von Sanders at Nazareth. It crossed the Samarian Hills, and, by 3 a.m., had cut the railway to Haifa. But its march had been too hurried, and, in its further advance, it became strung out, with the result that, thought it surprised the enemy and nearly captured von Sanders, its attack, made with too weak forces, was repulsed.

This was a pity. With a little less rush and a little more planning, the Commander-in-Chief and his whole staff might have been captured and a dramatic finish given to the operation.

The Australian Mounted Division, following in support, detached the 3rd

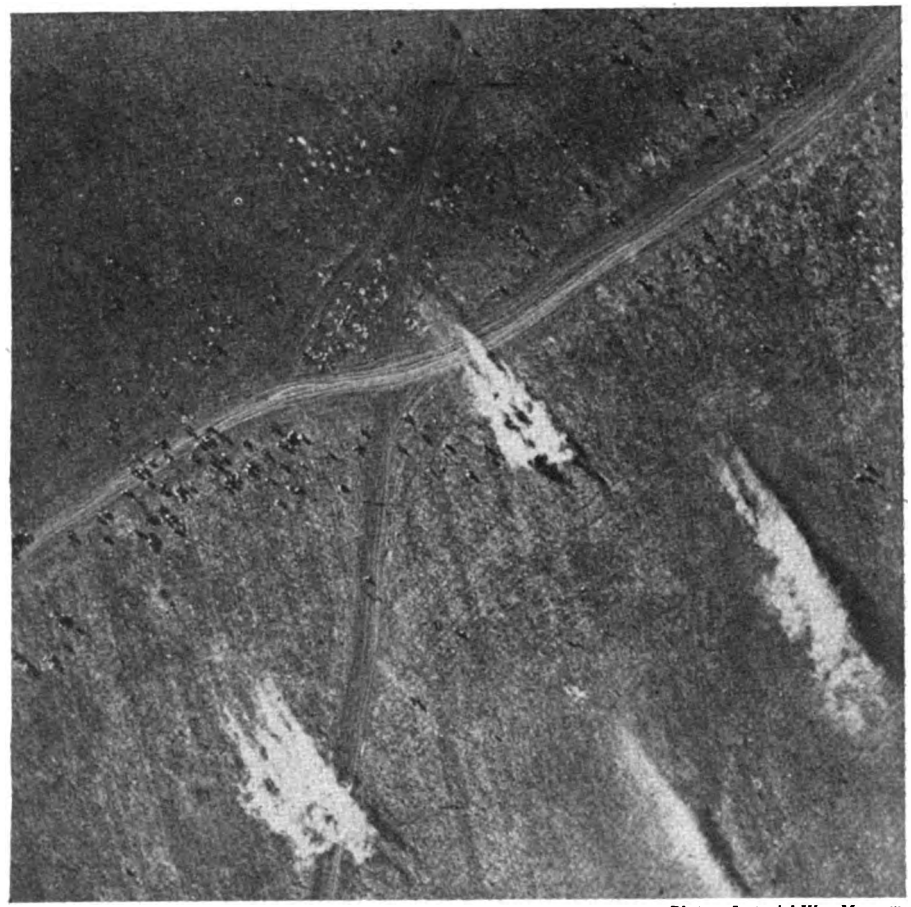

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AS SEEN FROM ABOVE

An aerial photograph of Turkish troops being bombed on and near the Damascus road. The Arab armies of the Hedjaz made their triumphal entry into the once splendid capital of the Caliphs on October 1st, 1918. The city had been under Turkish rule for 402 years, and the reconquest possessed a symbolical significance at least on a par with that of the Christian reoccupation of Jerusalem.

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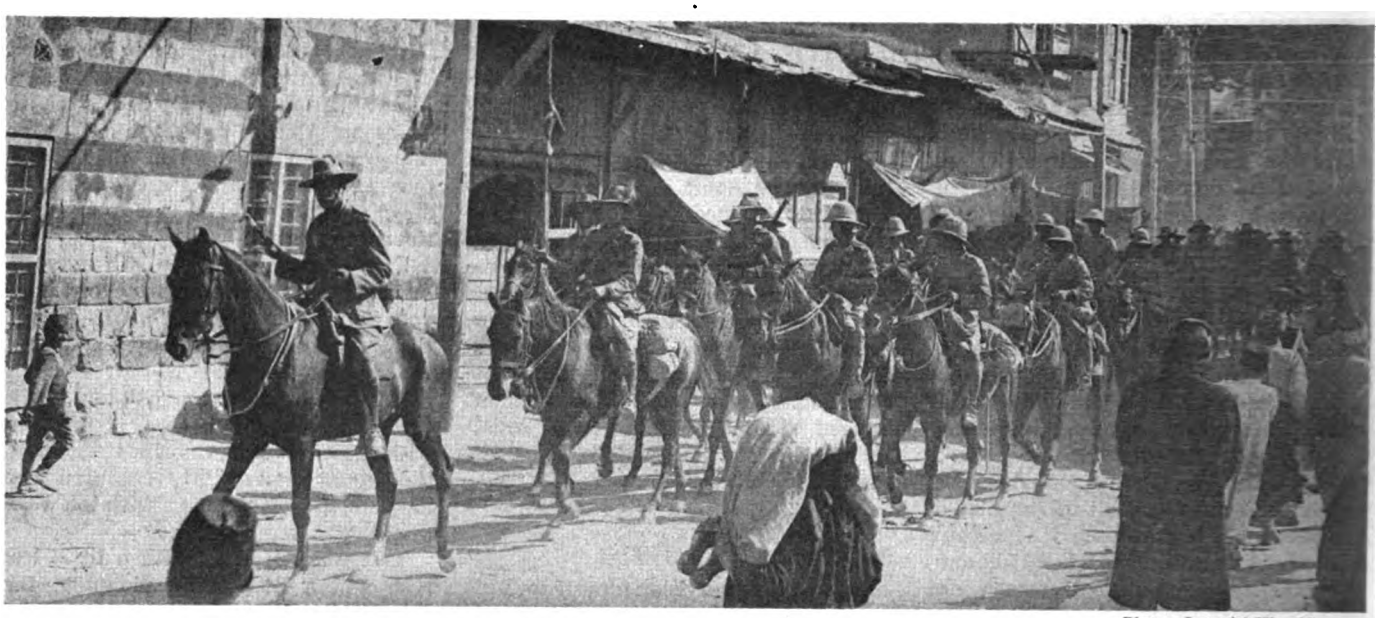

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

RIDING THROUGH DAMASCUS

This photograph shows the British and Allied entry into the city on October 2nd, one day after Lawrence, the Hedjaz Arabs, and their more immediate helpers had taken possession of their prize. On the left is General Chauvel, whose bodyguard consisted of a squadron of the 2nd Light Horse Regiment, and who was followed by units representing his three cavalry divisions. These included Home Country men, Australians, New Zealanders, Indians, and Frenchmen.

L.H. Brigade towards Jenin, which town it captured, together with 3,000 prisoners. The place was a great store depôt, and consequently the Arabs—men, women, and children—seizing their chance, fell upon the stacks of food and equipment, set dumps alight, and indulged generally in an orgy of pillage and incendiarism which the Australians, burdened with prisoners, could do but little to prevent.

Close by, a sub-section of machine guns, under Lieutenant Patterson, which had gone astray in the darkness, met a long column of the enemy in a defile. Patterson, who had 23 men with him, opened fire over the heads of the Turks and summoned them to surrender. A German nursing sister at the head of the column acted as interpreter, and, after a short talk, the whole body—2,800 men with 4 guns—surrendered. By morning, the 3rd L.H. Brigade had nearly 8,000 prisoners on its hands.

Engulfed Like the Hosts of Sisera

On the 21st, Nazareth was occupied. On the 23rd, the Imperial Service Brigade attacked Haifa. One squadron climbed Carmel to capture the Turkish guns there. Two squadrons swept round to the north-east, and the Jodhpore Lancers, covered by the fire of B Battery, H.A.C., and of all available machine guns, charged along the north side of the mountain. As they neared the brook of Kishon, however, they saw their ground-scouts swallowed up in the quicksands as the hosts of Sisera had been before them.

Holden, in command, immediately swung the squadrons left, against the Turkish machine guns on the lower slopes of Carmel, and then galloped into the town. At the same moment, the Mysore Lancers on the heights broke through the guns, the squadrons to the north-east wheeled inwards, and Haifa was won, together with 700 prisoners and 16 guns. This seems a small affair compared with the great battle raging close by; but, for a weak cavalry brigade, whose main force was charging between an impassable stream and a precipitous mountain, to capture a town defended by 1,000 men was a remarkable military feat.

Meanwhile, the 11th Cavalry Brigade was dealing with a gap which had been allowed to occur between Chaytor and Barrow, and from which the enemy was profiting. Two squadrons, 29th Lancers, charged one large body crossing the Jordan, and captured 800 prisoners—Mustafa Kemal, now Kemal Ataturk, the ruler of Turkey, narrowly escaping.

Farther south, the Middlesex Yeomanry on the west bank and Jacob's Horse on the east bank were attacking another body, which was resisting strongly. The yeomanry, assisted by the Hants Horse Artillery, having driven the Turks to the river, sent a squadron through a ford against their guns. Then, as the squadron charged home, the two regiments swept along both banks and captured 4,000 prisoners. The following day, the Middlesex Yeomanry, assisted later by the 29th Lancers, had another exciting combat of a similar nature and took 5,000 more prisoners. By then the gap was closed.

To Have Been Held at All Costs

On the 25th, the 4th L.H. Brigade captured Samakh—a village on the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee which von Sanders had said was to be held at all costs; for it was to have been the pivot of lines of defence along the lakes to the north and along the Yarmuk valley to the east. The Australians brought their machine guns into action against the west of the village, and charged into it from the south-east, just before dawn.

The garrison, however, mainly Germans, fought splendidly, and a fierce hand-to-hand struggle went on among the buildings for an hour before the assailants could claim success. This little victory was a fine feat of arms, in which skill and daring were equally mixed.

Away to the south-east, Chaytor's task was to hold the right flank and to attack the *Fourth Army* east of the Jordan should Allenby's success force it to retire. On the 22nd, he seized the bridge at Ad Damiye and all Turkish positions west of the river.

On the 23rd, he struck across the hills of Moab on a front of 15 miles, driving

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Photo : Imperial War Museum.

A LEADER AMONG HIS OWN

The Emir Feisal leaves the Hotel Victoria, Damascus, after an interview with General Allenby at which he was informed that the influence of the Arabs was not to extend too far westward. Feisal, the official leader of the Arab rebellion, was far more than a mere figurehead, and his able work for his people was carried on at the Peace Conferences of 1918 and 1919. Proclaimed King of Syria prior to the Syrian mandate, he became King of Iraq in 1921.

the Turks before him. " Jericho Jane " —a 6-inch gun which had been a nuisance all the summer—was his first captive. In the afternoon the New Zealand Brigade entered Es Salt, and, on the following day, the whole Anzac Division was east of that town.

On the 25th, the division moved on Amman. The Turks put up a strong resistance at first; but, when the Canterbury Regiment captured the citadel, the " defence cracked suddenly," and the town which had resisted former assaults so stoutly was taken, together with 2,500 prisoners and 10 guns.

On the 28th, the Light Horse came into touch with the garrison of Ma'an marching north. The Turkish commander was willing to surrender, but demanded protection from the Bedouins, who were waiting like greedy vultures to fall upon their prey as soon as it was safe to do so. As the Australians were too few in number to guarantee protection to a large force of unarmed prisoners, they spent the night in a Turkish entrenched camp, dispersed by parties along the perimeter, to help their enemies defend themselves against their allies. And they cracked many a joke on the subject.

Chaytor's force achieved all that was asked of it, and captured 10,000 prisoners and 57 guns, at a cost of only 139 casualties.

Not Forgetting Lawrence

Near Dera'a, Lawrence's Arabs harried the retreating Turks, and, on the 27th, occupied the town.

On the 26th, Allenby issued his orders for the pursuit: infantry to take over advanced positions of cavalry; the Desert Mounted Corps to move on Damascus, one division *via* Dera'a to dispose of the remnants of the *Fourth Army*, and two divisions west of the Sea of Galilee; and two infantry divisions to move on Beirut.

On the 27th, the Australians found the " Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob " over the Jordan destroyed and had a tough fight for the passage of the river. On the 29th, they were again delayed by a rear-guard. On the 30th, they drove the Turks from a position covering Damascus, and then, pursuing their advantage, cut off 4,000 of them in the Barata gorge. The 5th Cavalry Division also drove in the enemy opposed to it, and reached the outskirts of the town.

The 4th Cavalry Division, starting from Beisan on the 26th, received a severe check on that day, at the hands of the *Fourth Army*. On the 28th, it entered Dera'a and found the town swarming with Arab looters. On the 30th, it reached the outskirts of Damascus.

Thus, towards midnight on that date, the Desert Mounted Corps was spread north-west, south-west, and south of Damascus. Chauvel had orders to encircle the town on the morrow. On the 1st October, the 3rd L.H. Brigade, riding through the streets in pursuit of retreating Turks, was received with tumultuous acclamations. Eleven thousand Turks surrendered that day to Chauvel, bringing the number captured by the Desert Mounted Corps during the pursuit to 20,000, and the total since the battle began to 47,000—all at a cost of 500 casualties. The Turks also suffered heavy losses from the Arabs, who hung on their flanks continually during the retreat.

The pursuit was continued: the 7th Division occupied Beirut and Tripoli; on the 27th, the cavalry was fighting beyond Aleppo; on the 30th, the Armistice was signed. Turkey was out of the War.

'Twas a Famous Victory

Megiddo was one of the most remarkable victories of all time. The skill in planning, the secrecy and deceptions which covered the preparations, the brilliant execution, the relentless pursuit, the annihilation of the enemy—these combine to form a masterpiece of military art. Time, numbers, and weapons were indeed on the side of the artist; but that does not detract from his merit. The supreme demand made upon leadership is that it shall draw full value from the instruments at its disposal.

The soldier, British and Australian, abundantly helped by the airman and the sailor, had fought his way from Cairo to Aleppo, from the Nile to the Euphrates—some 600 miles. He had repulsed the Turk from the Canal, and had conquered the Senussi in the Western Desert. He had spent weary months digging a vast network of trenches east of Suez.

When it was decided to defend

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Egypt at El Arish, he had marched across Sinai through deep sand and under a burning sun. He had battered three times at the gates of Gaza, losing heavily before he won through.. Translated from the heat of the plains, he had faced the mountain blizzards of Judæa and Moab. He had followed the steps of the Crusaders and had won Jerusalem, setting his feet reverently on the way of the Cross and in the Holy Sepulchre. Everywhere, as he marched and fought, there hung around him memories of his Bible history.

Finally, he had taken part in a resounding victory, which, more than any other factor, brought Turkey to her knees. And, through all, he had maintained his ancient reputation: stout in battle, cheery in adversity, kindly to inhabitants and to prisoners.

By his side—a tried and gallant comrade—fought the Indian, in ever-increasing numbers as the War lengthened, placing Britain in great debt to his country for unwavering support in the hour of need.

And the Army was opposed to no mean adversary. "Johnnie" Turk was a fine soldier, in a class by himself. Short of food, water, and boots, without any of the luxuries which accompany the European in the field, he would hold out in the vilest of weather against overwhelming odds, and, when forced to retreat, would march all night and be found fighting stoutly as ever next day. There seemed to be no end to his endurance.

In his final defeat, his nerve was shattered by powerful air attacks against which he had no protection, and he then fell an easy prey to a ubiquitous cavalry.

German, Turk, and Austrian

The Germans produced some fine leaders in Palestine—von Falkenhayn, von Oppen, and Kress von Kressenstein, to name but a few. The Turk and the German, however, could never mix, for the Turk hated being domineered, and the German despised administrative inefficiency. The German and Austrian soldiers fought magnificently throughout the campaign, and, even when unparalleled disaster had fallen upon the Turkish Army, they stood out unshakable, like islands in a sea of fugitives.

To whom shall the palm of victory be awarded—to the infantry or the cavalry? To neither. The rifleman bore the greater pain, the trooper reaped the higher reward. It was by their intimate co-operation, and by the ready and unfailing support of the guns, that they achieved success. Cavalry, in one of the finest performances of a glorious history, may have been singing its swan-song; and infantry may perhaps have shone for the last time as the Queen of Battles. Who knows? The future may lie with the mechanic. But, whatever its shape, it will belong to the Briton while he keeps the stout heart of his Palestine days.

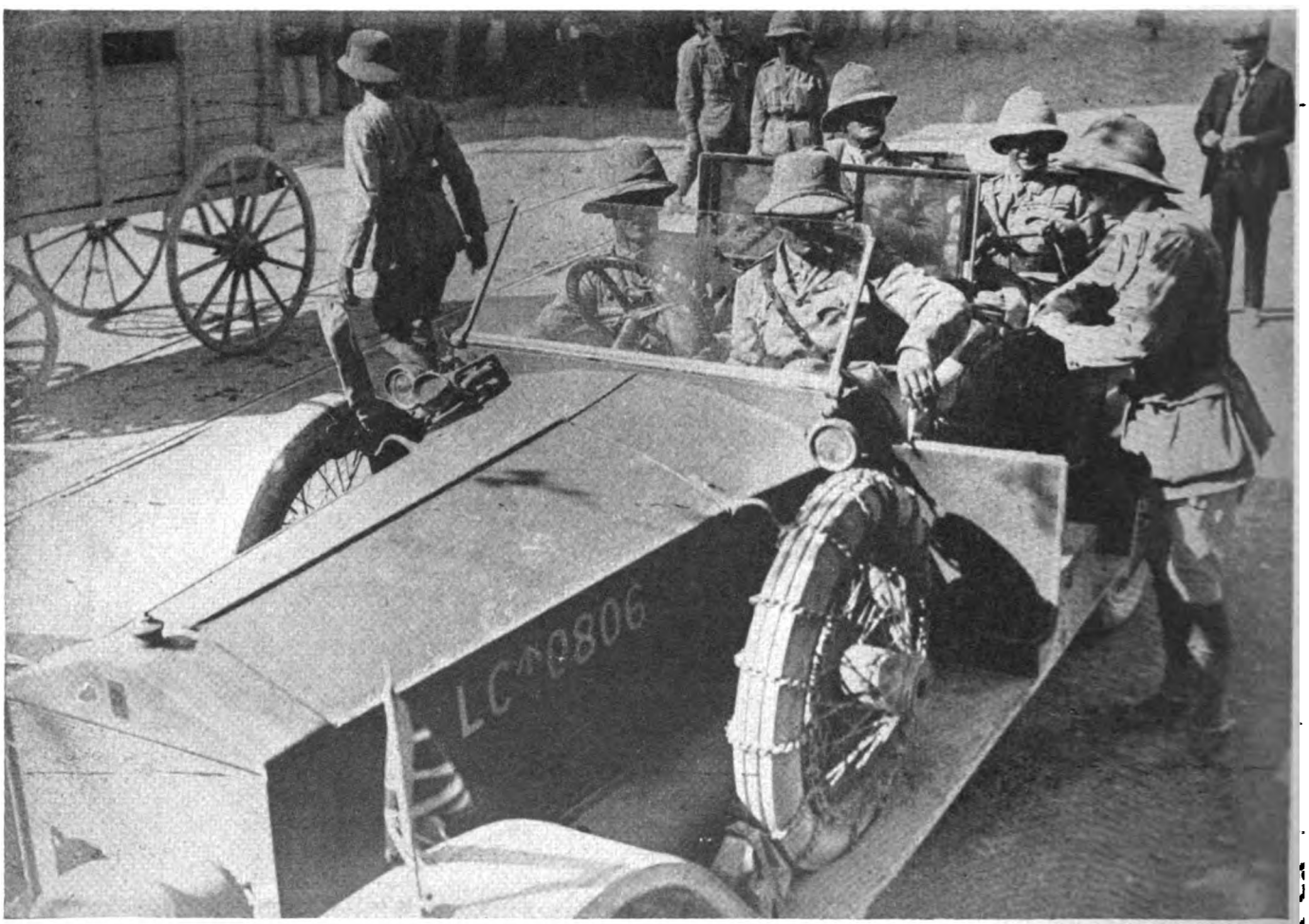

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ALLENBY IN DAMASCUS

General Allenby met the Emir Feisal on October 3rd, and the same day both entered Damascus, which Colonel Lawrence had been holding until relieved. This photograph shows the General, with some of his officers, in the course of driving through the city shortly after the occupation.

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CHAPTER LXXXVIII

THE LANDSLIDE IN THE WEST

The following chapter covers a brief period of eleven days, the last eventful days of a conflict the like of which has never been known in world history. The British and Imperial troops continued to press forward, and they, together with their Allies, the Armies of France, of Belgium, and of the United States of America, began to feel that at long last the end was at hand. At brief intervals there were received messages of the greatest significance. The Kaiser had abdicated. The Crown Prince had renounced his right to the Imperial Throne of Germany. But still the victorious armies pushed on. On November 11th, at eleven a.m., came the end.

THIS chapter will deal with a period of merely eleven days; but short though the period was, it was one whose import has probably never been matched in the history of the world. Those eleven days witnessed the downfall of the greatest military power on the globe. It was Germany who had drawn the sword. She had entered upon war in obedience to no blind impulse. Her plans had been carefully prepared, and she had taken every precaution to ensure success. She had turned Europe into a shambles, but she had failed to achieve her object, and was now to be called upon to pay the terrible reckoning.

Germany's Declining Man-power

Her position in the closing days of October, 1918, will have been realised in part from a perusal of an earlier chapter. The decline in German man-power became increasingly steep. The Allies had a superiority of about 40 per cent. On October 31st the Germans had only one fresh division in reserve. Half-a-million men remained on leave, the majority because they refused to return, but others because the congested railways could not bring them back. Nearly 300,000 had been lost as prisoners since August 8th. Thirty-two divisions had been disbanded.

On October 24th the Italian armies had opened a great offensive against Austria and, before the month was out, the Emperor of Austria had written to the Kaiser announcing his irrevocable decision to sue for a separate peace. Of Germany's two other allies, Bulgaria had already passed out of the War, and her example had been followed by Turkey. Deserted by her confederates, and suffering terrible hardships from the blockade imposed by the British Navy, Germany's one object was now to seek an end to the struggle on the best terms that she might obtain.

The object of Foch and Haig, on the other hand, was so to batter, in the time left to them, the German armies, that the German Government would be glad to accept almost any terms that might be put to it as an ultimatum. Military operations therefore did not slacken for a moment; on the contrary, another great drive was started on November 1st, extending, as before, from the neighbourhood of the Belgian coastline to Sedan. The main features of this great operation will be mentioned later, but the War—in the sense, that is, of a struggle in which each side had a sporting chance of victory—was really over. Consequently, we can for the moment turn to the question, not of war, but of peace.

The "Fourteen Points"

As far back as January, 1918, Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States of America, in his message to Congress, had presented a programme enumerating the demands which America would make before ever concluding a peace. From the number of paragraphs of which the programme was composed the document came to be known as the "Fourteen Points." There is no need here to do more than mention the existence of this document, for it was issued by Mr. Wilson "off his own bat," so to speak. Neither France nor England had been consulted about it, nor had given to it any assent.

Indeed, one clause—concerning the "absolute freedom of navigation of the seas"—was, later, vigorously repudiated by Lloyd George, as being positively dangerous to the interests of this country. But the document, by its name of the Fourteen Points, was at any rate to form, as we shall see, a basis for subsequent discussion.

We pass now from this rather visionary and idealistic "message" of January 18th to the facts, grim and hard, of the following August 8th. Haig's victory of Amiens gave rise to anxious debates at German Headquarters. The blow had been utterly unexpected; and the revelation that the British Army had so quickly recovered its fighting strength came as a great shock. Ever afterwards that 8th August has been known as the *Black Day of the German Army.*

Ludendorff tendered his resignation. It was refused. He then advised the German Government to seek the best terms it could from its enemies. Various conferences took place, but no definite decision was reached. The events of September showed, however, that the matter was becoming daily more and more serious and urgent; and, on the evening of the 28th, Ludendorff gave in. On the following day, the 29th September—and the reader, with the preceding events fresh in his memory, will remember the terrible blow which the British dealt Germany on that day—he and Hindenburg met the Kaiser, and insisted on an immediate request for an armistice.

Three days later an emissary from Ludendorff explained to the Reichstag in Berlin the military situation. Although the emissary spoke bravely enough of the "firm will of the nation," his picture of the actual state of affairs from the practical military point of view was highly alarming. The effect was terrific: the members were completely crushed.[1]

No Negotiation with the Kaiser

The net result was that an official despatch was forwarded by the new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, to President Wilson, begging him to take in hand the question of the restoration of peace, and declaring that the German Government would accept the Fourteen Points as the basis of negotiation. Three days later—on October 8th—the President gave a qualified reply, and on the 14th October he indicated that there could be no negotiation with the German Emperor.

Meanwhile Prince Max had despatched a second note, in which he assured Mr. Wilson that a new government had been set up in Germany, and that he, himself, was now speaking both for that

1 Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 573.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

MEMORIES OF LOOS

Taken on November 20th, 1915, this is a view of Le Maroc, the western neighbour of Loos, and the nearest village to our front line prior to the attack of September 25th. The photograph was taken from the granary in Le Maroc, and shows in the background the Lens suburb known as the Cité St. Pierre.

government and for the German people. Then, on the very same day—the 12th October—either by sheer bad luck, or with a fatuity which, in its frequent repetitions, amounted almost to a disease, the Germans "queered their own pitch" by a specially stupid submarine attack in the Irish Sea.

The *Leinster*, one of the mail steamers plying between Ireland and England, was sunk with the loss of more than 400 lives, including those of some American citizens. President Wilson had in 1917 been goaded into war by the inhuman German custom of torpedoing passenger steamers, and now the loss of the *Leinster* drew from him a burning protest.

Actually—as everyone who moved between Ireland and England during the War well knows—the Holyhead and Kingstown mailboats were often crammed with soldiers, some on duty, and many of them proceeding on, or returning from, leave. But ostensibly they were passenger steamers, and the action of the Germans in sinking the *Leinster*, at the very moment when they were appealing to President Wilson, showed, at any rate, a considerable lack of tact.

Things were moving so swiftly and so unfavourably in the Fatherland, that the danger now was lest the victorious Allies find no real German government with which to treat. Mr. Wilson's flat refusal to have anything to do with the German Emperor made the dethronement of that monarch a possibility; and during this month of October brutal and unrelenting pressure was put on the Kaiser to abdicate, and upon the Crown Prince to renounce the throne in favour of his son, a minor.

The German Navy Mutinies

So uncompromising did the political situation appear to the Emperor that he slipped away from Berlin to seek the protection of General Headquarters of the Army. On the same day the German Navy mutinied. It had been the intention of the German authorities to send the fleet out to force an action with the British. But the spirit of the German sailor had been long deteriorating, especially in the battleships. Cooped up inactively in harbour, with insufficient food, deprived of their best junior officers and petty officers—who had been selected for submarine work—increasingly impatient of the precise discipline, and sometimes penetrated by the pacific propaganda of the Independent Socialists, the ratings were in no mood for the heroism of a forlorn hope.[1]

The real result of the dubious Battle of Jutland was now clear to the whole world. In the Grand Fleet there still reigned the longing, there still lived the hope, that "the devils would come out again." But in the German Navy the crews of two great ships-of-war refused to obey the order to put to sea. The spirit of mutiny quickly spread, and by November 4th the great port of Kiel was in the hands of naval mutineers.

1 Cruttwell, *op. cit.*, p. 586.

Photo: G. T. Watson.

NOT WHOLLY CHANGED

Much though this highly industrial area has altered in the twenty years since the Armistice, the desolate expanse in the foreground of this view represents, according to the local inhabitants, the exact site of the war-time picture, the wall being part of the old granary.

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At once 40,000 of them moved by warship, lorry, and train over north-west Germany, carrying the red flag and seizing in quick succession Hamburg, Bremen, and Hanover; Brunswick, and even Cologne, were soon in their hands. Revolution stalked through Germany, and it was the German sailors who led it.

There was, however, for the stricken Germans one ray of light in those dark days of terror. On November 5th, President Wilson informed Germany that she might approach the Allies for an armistice.

While this correspondence—feverish and supplicating on the part of Germany, stern and unhurried on the part of the American President—was flashing backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, the Allied armies were rolling forward all along the line in France and Belgium, in ceaseless battle. The last drive began on November 1st, with a Franco-American attack in the region of the Argonne. Before the battle had so much as started, the German morale had begun to crack; and now it gave way altogether under the steady pressure of the American advance.

The American divisions which had done most of the hard fighting in October had either been rested, and their ranks refilled, or had been relieved by fresh divisions. The Bourgogne Forest was cleared, and the French army on the left was able to join hands with the Americans; despite the endeavours of German machine-gunners to delay the pursuit, a division of Americans, on November 5th, was close to the southern outskirts of Sedan.[1] "The morning of the 7th found men of the 42nd and 1st Divisions on the heights overlooking the city."[2]

Allies Cross the Scheldt

Opposite the British armies, in the centre of this colossal drive, the German resistance daily crumbled away. At the end of October the enemy strove to hold the line of the River Scheldt, but this strong position was turned by portions of the Third and First Armies attacking south of Valenciennes, which place was entered by the Canadian Corps on November 2nd. The number of prisoners taken in this operation exceeded 5,000. Two days later a resolute attack by the Fourth, Third, and First Armies forced the Germans still farther back, and brought the British troops to the area where they had assembled prior to their advance to the Mons position in August, 1914.

Before dawn on November 5th, British soldiers had reached the edge of that Mormal Forest which had forced the two wings of the old B.E.F. to lose touch during those anxious days of the Retreat from Mons. In this drive the total capture by the British amounted to 19,000 prisoners and 450 guns, while on the right the French First Army had taken, in addition to numerous pieces of artillery, over 5,000 prisoners.

The same story can be told of the left of the great surge forward. South of Ghent, the two French corps on King Albert's right, each of which now contained an American division, drove back the Germans along the Scheldt, and the Americans captured Audenarde.

The Germans were now unmistakably "on the run." The term, however, requires some qualification, for both

[1] Sir F. Maurice, *The Last Four Months*, pp. 215–17.

[2] Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, p. 687.

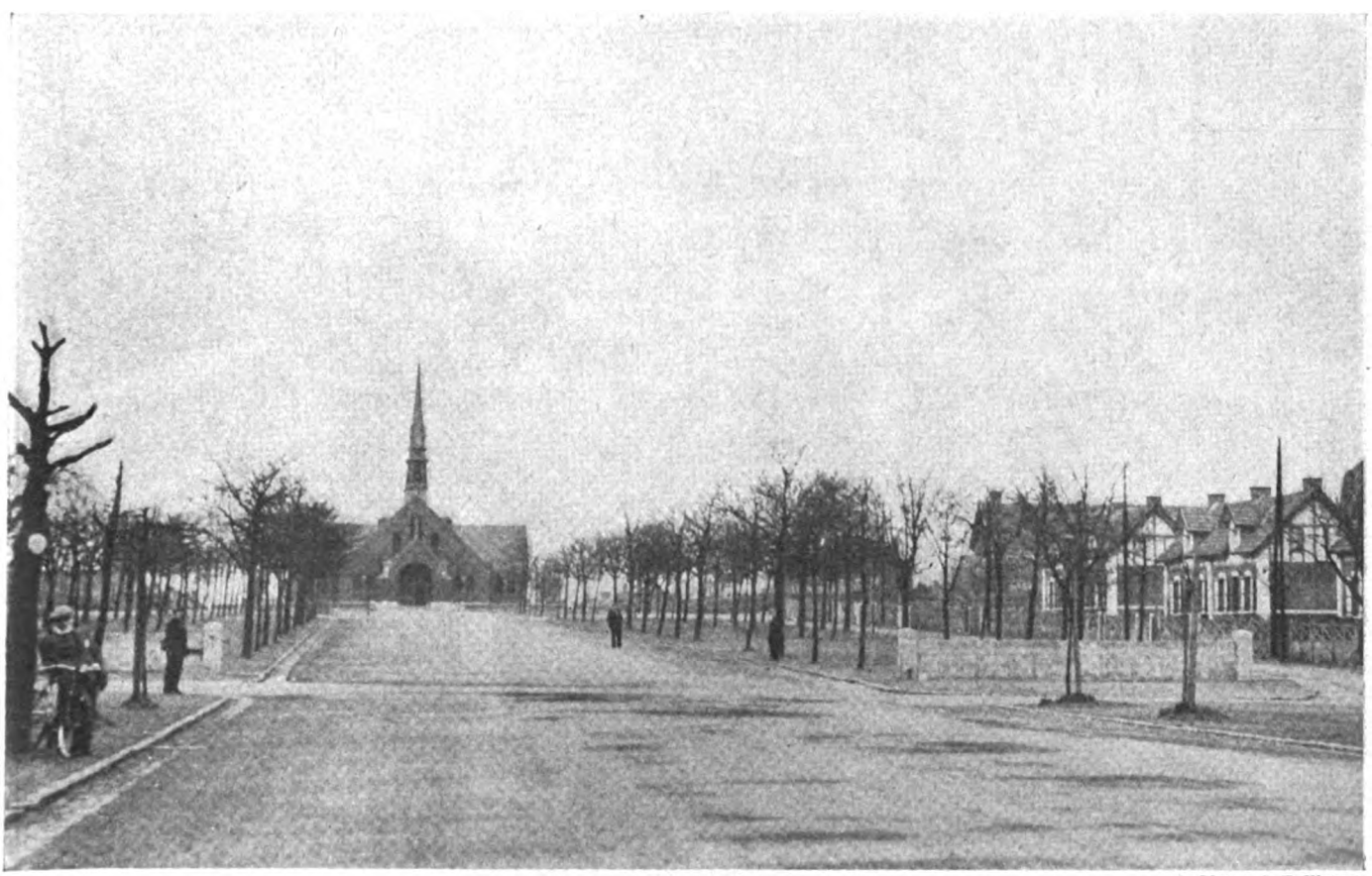

Photo: G. T. Watson.

CONTRAST

It is not easy to believe that this scene lies within 100 yards of the desolation seen in the two preceding photographs of Le Maroc; but such is the case, and the present view shows part of the beautifully-planned housing estate, designed to accommodate some of the workers of Lens, which has risen upon the ruins of the devastated suburb.

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pursued and pursuers had at this juncture perforce to check their pace. Behind the German front line the roads were blocked with masses of vehicles; and on the railways were thousands upon thousands of trucks—glued, one might say, to the rails, in complete immobility through lack of engines to move them.

On the side of the Allies the pursuit was delayed by the very complete destruction of roads, bridges, and railways which the Germans, with characteristic thoroughness, had carried out; and so rapid had been the advance during the past ten weeks that the supply services could not get food, stores, and ammunition sufficiently quickly up to the men in the line. But if the movement necessarily slowed down, there was never quiescence. There was, on the German side, the struggling and swaying of congestion: "the German Army jammed in the Liége bottle-neck was like a whale aground in shallow water, trapped by its very bulk and able neither to defend itself nor escape." [1]

Strange Coincidences

In the last hours of the great contest which for more than four years had shaken Europe, there was more than one curious coincidence. British cavalry officers who had fought at Mons in August, 1914, found themselves, on November 11th, 1918, on the scene of their original encounter with German troopers. More interesting still, the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment which, on the 23rd August, 1914, had fought in the loop of the canal north-east of Mons, was actually entering that self-same loop the day hostilities ceased.

And on the other flank of the colossal drive which had opened on November 1st French troops—as the curtain was rung down—were pouring into Sedan, that little, obsolete fortress-town where, nearly half-a-century before, the French Empire was swept away, and where French arms suffered humiliation and defeat on a scale and to a degree from which the Germans in 1918 were immune.

The end had now come. Since July 18th the Germans in France had lost nearly 400,000 prisoners and over 6,300 guns, the lion's share of the booty having fallen to the British armies. On November 7th the King of Bavaria was dethroned; two days later revolution broke out in Berlin; and on the 10th November the German Emperor fled in his car to the Dutch frontier, which, after some hours' delay, he was allowed to cross, never again—at least until the time of writing—to recross.

[1] Dewar and Boraston, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The date of this illustration is only nine days before the Armistice, and already the scene has shifted far to the east of the old, familiar battle-areas of 1915—summer, 1918. The town is Valenciennes, entered on November 2nd, 1918, by the 4th Canadian Division. A Canadian patrol is seen advancing up one of the streets which cross the railway. In view of the general demolition, the German exhortation to exercise care in opening the level-crossing gates reads somewhat ironically.

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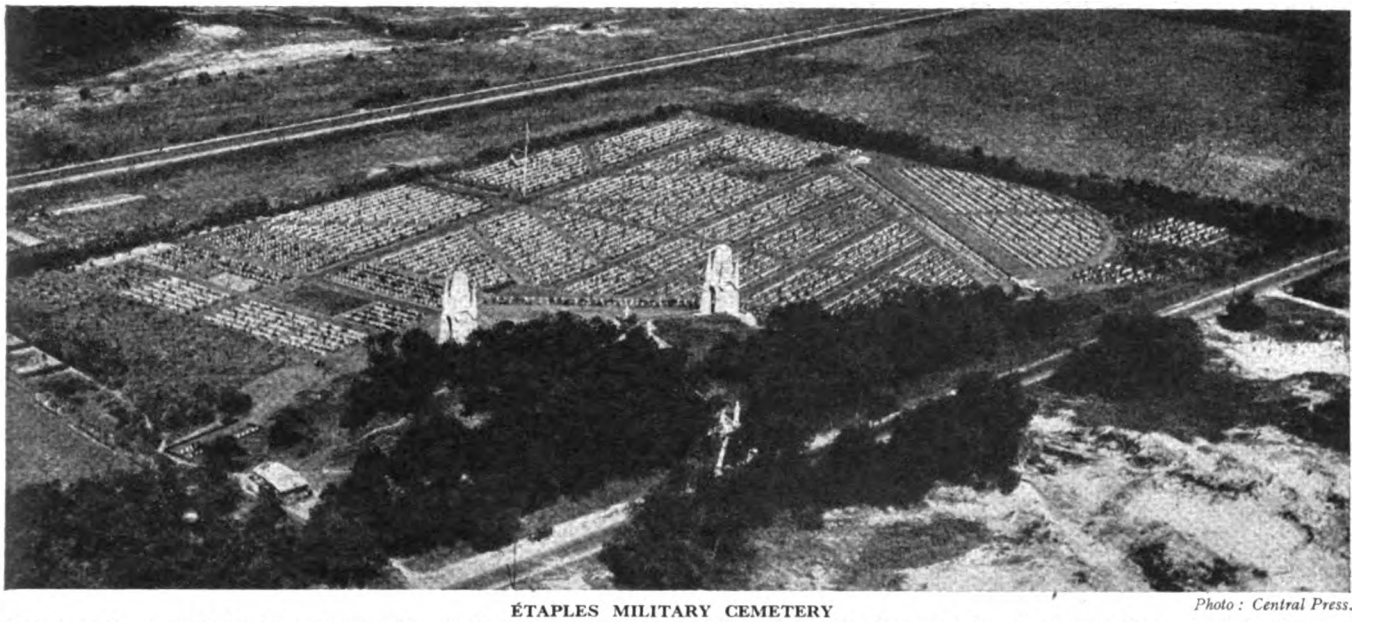

ÉTAPLES MILITARY CEMETERY Photo: Central Press.

This must be one of the best-known cemeteries on the Western Front, for it is visible to all who travel, by rail or coastal road, from Boulogne to Paris. It stands on some of the ground once covered by our immense reinforcement camps and hospitals at "Eatapples," and houses a vast number of dead. These comprise 8,767 men of the United Kingdom, 1,122 Canadians, 461 Australians, 261 New Zealanders, 67 South Africans, 28 British West Indians, 18 Newfoundlanders, 5 Indians, 1 Chinese, 47 Portuguese, 2 Belgians, 1 American, and 655 Germans.

On the evening of the 7th November, four German commissioners—Erzberger, the Secretary of State, Count Obendorff, representing diplomacy, Major General von Winterfeldt, of the Army, and Captain Vanselow of the German Navy, passed through the Allied lines with white flags waving and a trumpeter in attendance, all in the traditional style. Thence they were escorted to the nearest railway for conveyance to the temporary headquarters of Marshal Foch. These were in a train which, made up of several *wagons-lits*, a private saloon, and various saloons fitted as offices, typing, and telephone compartments, had drawn up in an empty siding near Réthondes, in the Forest of Compiègne.

The surroundings were peaceful and quiet—a clearing in the woods, made originally for heavy artillery, guarded by sentries and cut off from the outside world, except for telephonic communication with Foch's headquarters in the field, and with Paris and Versailles. The road from Compiègne to Soissons ran close to the clearing, and the River Aisne was not far away. Darkness reigned in the forest, except where a shaft of light from saloon-door or window shone occasionally upon the tree-trunks. About a hundred yards away from the Marshal's train was another siding, empty.

The Armistice Delegates Arrive

At 7 a.m. on Saturday, the 9th November, a dark, frosty, mournful morning, the train bearing the four German delegates arrived in the forest, and came to rest in its special siding. General Weygand at once came from Marshal Foch's train, and conveyed the message that if the delegates wished to see the Allied Commander-in-Chief, he would be disposed to receive them at nine o'clock precisely. At that hour the four Germans proceeded in single file to the other train.

On entering the saloon, the delegates, who looked uncomfortable and rather anxious, were received stiffly but courteously by General Weygand, representing the Allied armies, and by Admiral Sir George Hope, representing the sea forces. Saying that he would announce the arrival of the German delegates, General Weygand went at once to the Marshal's saloon. Immediately afterwards Marshal Foch entered, followed by Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, First Sea Lord; and after exchanging salutes, all lined up facing one another across the long, narrow table in this order:

Germans: Obendorff, Erzberger, Winterfeldt, Vanselow.

Allies: Hope, Wemyss, Foch, Weygand.[1]

As he gazed at the four nervous German emissaries across the table, Foch said to himself, "There is the German Empire. We must be polite, but we will show them who we are." Then, aloud, he asked his visitors who they were, and the Germans gave their names, titles, and rank.

"Have you any credentials?" asked Foch, formally. "If so, we must examine them."

The necessary documents were produced and handed to the Marshal, who retired with Admiral Wemyss to examine them. On their return, Foch requested Erzberger to introduce the German delegates, and then, in turn, he presented the members of his own mission. The formalities were now over: the real business was about to begin.

"What do you want?" asked Foch.

"We wish to know your proposals."

But the Generalissimo was not the man to allow his opponents to manœuvre him into playing his trumps too soon.

"I have no proposals to make," he answered curtly.

The German envoys went a little farther. "We should like to know on what conditions an armistice could be arranged," said their spokesman.

"I have no conditions to make. I don't want an armistice," was the reply this time.

Erzberger then pulled out President Wilson's Note and started to read it. But Foch quickly stopped him.

"Do you wish to *ask for* an armistice? If so, say so."

Thereupon the Germans formally made the request: "We ask for an armistice."

"Good," said Foch, "I shall now read you the conditions drawn up by the Allied Governments."

[1] Sir George Aston, *The Biography of the late Marshal Foch*, pp. 274, 275.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

JUBILATION IN VALENCIENNES

A Canadian patrol making its cautious way through this town is to be seen in a photograph on page 1476. Here we show—albeit half-hidden in a motley throng—the band of the 87th Canadian Infantry Battalion playing outside the Hôtel de Ville two days after Valenciennes had been captured.

Foch the Merciless

As the terrible terms were disclosed, the envoys—in Foch's own words—"looked weary, tired out, like hunted animals." When the reading was finished, it was intimated that the terms must be accepted or rejected within 72 hours. Erzberger cried out, and in a long speech begged for concessions. He pointed out that revolution had broken out at home; that the soldiers would no longer obey orders, that Germany was starving; that all authority had disappeared. . . .

Foch cut him short: "You are suffering from a disease of the vanquished. I refuse everything."

Winterfeldt begged for a suspension of hostilities to avoid further loss of life. This, too, was refused. The Germans then asked for copies of the terms; for facilities for sending a wireless message to their government; and also for leave to send a courier with a copy of the terms. These points were conceded, and the Germans retired to their saloon.

The courier took the terms to Spa, having considerable difficulty in passing the German lines, for he was fired upon, and had to withdraw to safety for a time. Meanwhile Foch was taking no chances. Immediately after the meeting with the German envoys, he issued what proved to be the last General Operation Order of the War, which ran as follows:

"The enemy, disorganised by our repeated attacks, is giving ground on all the front. It is necessary to keep up and quicken our action. I call upon the energy and initiative of the commanders-in-chief and of their armies to render decisive the results that have been obtained."

All day long at Spa the terms of the armistice were being feverishly considered. Germany—the Germany that had entered the War so arrogantly in 1914—had now ceased to exist. The Emperor had abdicated and fled to Holland. He was followed by the Crown Prince. The reports which poured in from all sides were desperate All the crossings of the Rhine were now in the hands of the mutineers. The contagion was spreading rapidly towards the front. At Liége, Namur, and Brussels mobs of frenzied soldiers were hoisting the red flag and selling their rifles to Belgians.

Utterly Ruthless Terms

When the clauses of the armistice were perused the utter defeat of Germany was revealed to those who read them. There was to be immediate evacuation of all invaded territory; the enemy armies were to retire into Germany and to pass beyond the Rhine, leaving a zone of German territory on the left bank to be occupied by the Allies.

In arms the Germans were to surrender, in good condition, 5,000 guns, 30,000 machine guns, and 2,000 aeroplanes; as well as 5,000 railway engines, 150,000 trucks, and 5,000 motor lorries in good order and with spare parts. All Allied prisoners-of-war were to be given up immediately, without reciprocity, and the separate treaties which Ger-

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ENTERING TOURNAI

Tournai is the first large town encountered due east of Lille, from which it is distant 23 km., with the Franco-Belgian frontier passing roughly midway between. Captured by the Germans on August 24th, 1914, its reoccupation was completed on November 9th, 1918. Above are seen 18-pounder batteries of the 74th Division taking part in the official British entry.

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Photo: Imperial War Museum.

HEARING THAT IT WAS OVER

A captain of the Irish Guards on the Western Front reads out to his men the news of the signing of the Armistice. The uplifted hats, however, are not altogether typical, for on the whole the men to whom peace meant most showed the least outward reaction to its coming. The chief concern was to fire the War's last shot.

many had made with Russia and Roumania were to be denounced.

Nor were the naval clauses less severe. All German submarines were to be handed over. And of the High Seas Fleet there were to be given up 6 battle-cruisers, the best 10 battleships, 8 light cruisers, and 50 of the best destroyers. These terms, be it noted, made no mention of financial questions. Reparations, a war indemnity, surrender of colonies—all those could wait until the definitive Peace Treaty. The demands put forward in the Armistice document were merely for a payment on account: the price which Germany must pay just for the fighting to cease. And she must pay on the nail—or at any rate, she must signify her assent within three days.

From the anxious conference at Spa, Hindenburg had telegraphed to Erzberger indicating concessions to be pleaded for, but ending with the significant words, "Even if you cannot obtain these concessions, you must sign nevertheless." In the railway train in that lonely siding in the Forest of Compiègne that night of the 10th–11th November, 1918, discussion was resumed. Until five o'clock in the morning the arguing went on. Some slight ameliorations were granted by Foch, but on the main issues he was immovable, adamant, pitiless, and of stone. Erzberger cried out in his agony, "A nation of seventy millions may suffer, but it does not die." "*Très bien*," replied Foch politely.

The end came at a quarter past five. The great German colossus—Michael or Wotan or Siegfried, or whatever deity of mythology the Germans had taken for their symbol—was beaten to his knees. The count was being taken. The giant could not rise. Erzberger threw the towel into the ring. The big fight had ended in a knock-out after all.

He took a pen, brandished it in the air, and signed. . . . "I saw him grind his teeth," said Foch afterwards.

"Hostilities Will Cease"

Weygand took charge of everything while Foch retired for a brief hour's rest. When he returned, he put his signature to the following.

Marshal Foch to Commanders-in-Chief.

11th November, 1918.

1. Hostilities will cease on every front from 11 a.m. French time, November the 11th.
2. Until further orders the Allied troops will not pass beyond the line reached at that time; an exact note is to be made of that line.
3. All communication with the enemy is prohibited until receipt of instructions sent to Army Commanders.

F. FOCH.

On the first stroke of the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, a load was lifted from the world. In London there was wild rejoicing. "Suddenly the first stroke of

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

ONE WAR AND ANOTHER

Ten days after the close of the Great War of the twentieth century, a group of British officers and men stands near the spot where their compatriots had fought and won the last battle in the great—in some ways even greater—war of the century before. This photograph comes from the little Belgian village of Waterloo—and the hotel tells its own tale.

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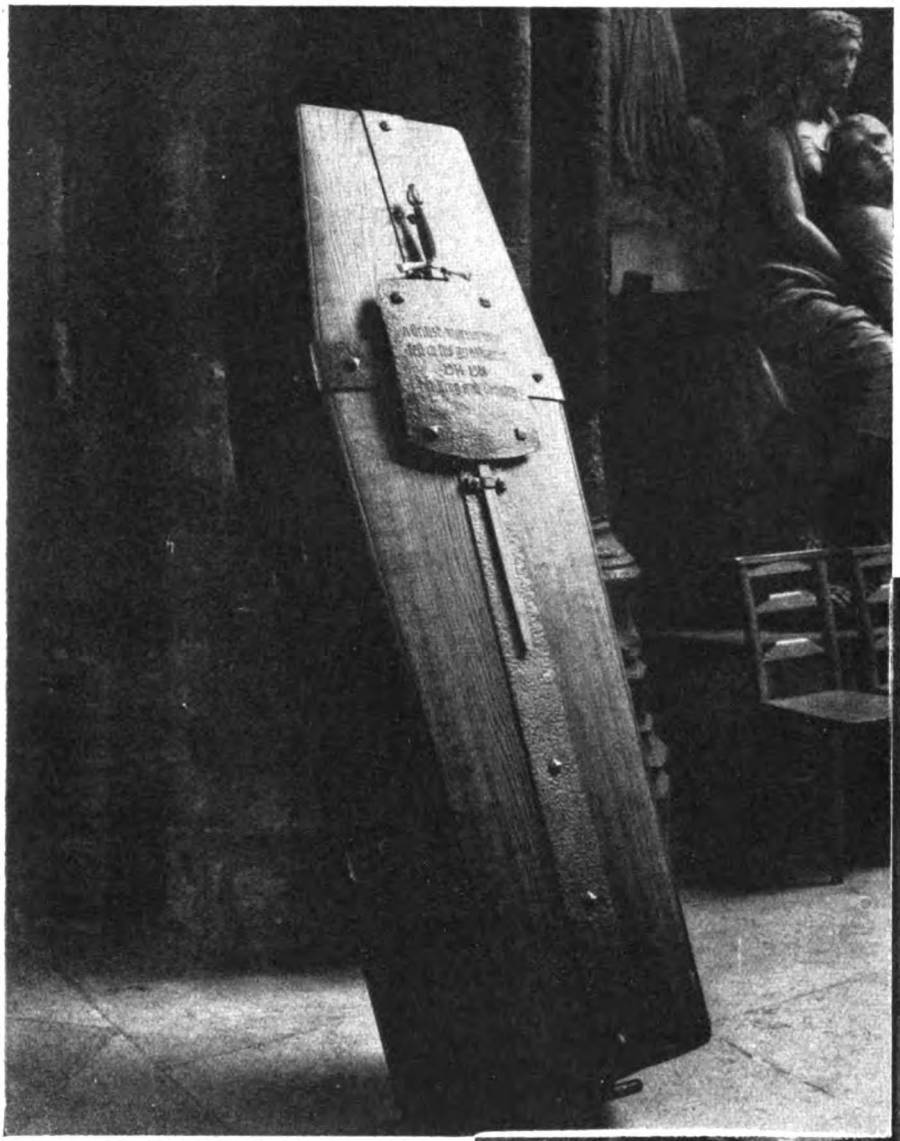

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

A SYMBOL OF TRAGEDY

A photograph, taken in November, 1920, of the coffin of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. On the beaten iron plate the inscription reads: "a British warrior who fell in the great war of 1914-1918 for King and Country."

the chime," wrote Mr. Churchill.[1] "I looked again at the broad street beneath me. It was deserted. From the portals of one of the large hotels absorbed by Government Departments darted the slight figure of a girl clerk, distractedly gesticulating while another stroke resounded. Then from all sides men and women came scurrying into the street. Streams of people poured out of all the buildings.

"The bells of London began to clash. Northumberland Avenue was now crowded with people in hundreds, nay in thousands, rushing hither and thither in a frantic manner, shouting and screaming with joy. I could see that Trafalgar Square was already swarming. Around me, in our very headquarters in the Hotel Metropole, disorder had broken out. Doors banged, feet clattered down corridors. Everyone rose from the desk and cast aside pen and paper. All bounds were broken. The tumult grew. It grew like a gale, but from all sides simultaneously.

"The street was now a seething mass of humanity. Flags appeared as if by magic. Streams of men and women flowed from the Embankment. They mingled with torrents pouring down the Strand on their way to acclaim the King. Almost before the last stroke had died away the strict, war-straitened, regulated streets of London had become a triumphant pandemonium."

[1] *The Great War*, iv, p. 1232.

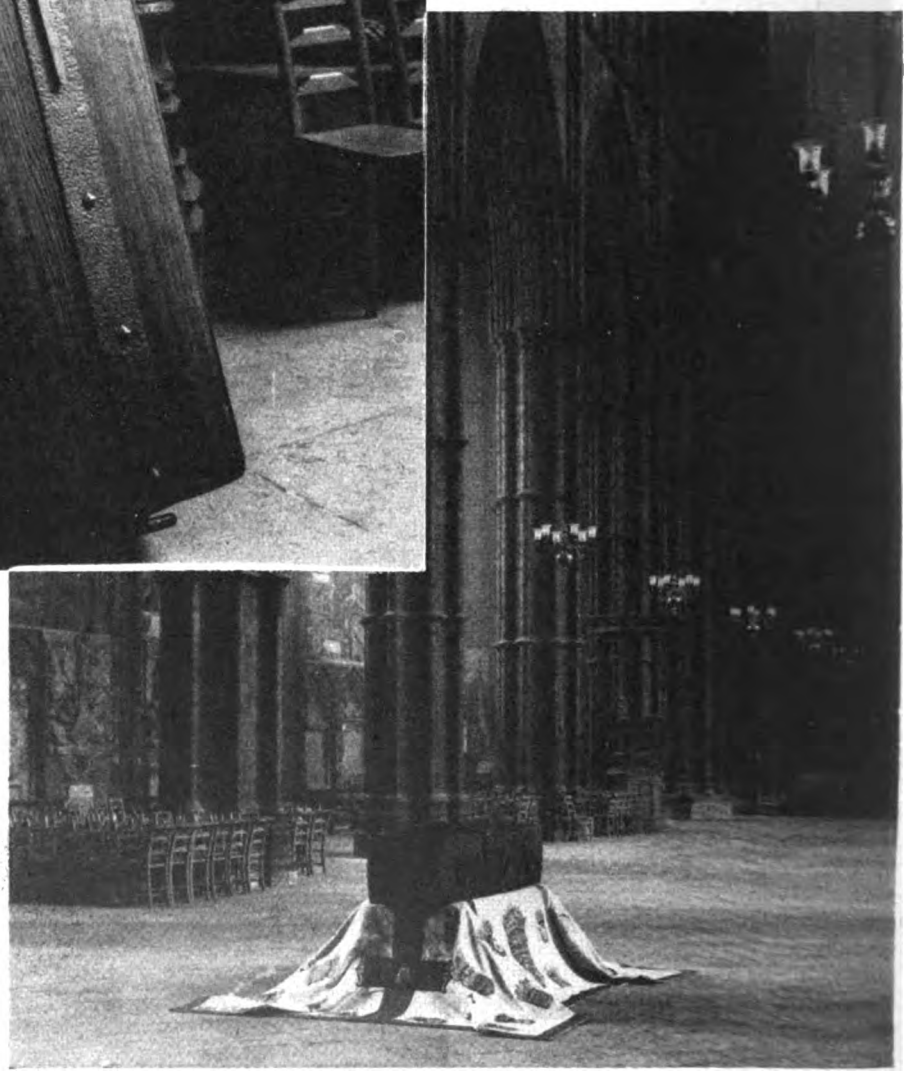

Photo: Imperial War Museum.

AWAITING INTERMENT

Nearly every nation which participated in the War has adopted the gracious gesture of burying, to impersonate the multitude who died for her, on land and sea and in the air, far from home or close to it, one in whose death perished also all clue to his identity. We have laid our Warrior in our most hallowed temple; France honours hers beneath the Arc de Triomphe; and so it is, among the combatants great and small, successful and unsuccessful, on either side.

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Paris Goes Mad

And in Paris? Paris, that twice had almost felt the breath, and heard the tramp, of approaching German hosts: Paris, that had been, for weeks, under long-range bombardment. "It looked as though the whole populace had gone entirely out of their minds. The city was turned into pandemonium. The streets and boulevards were packed with people singing and dancing and wearing all sorts of odd costumes. The crowds were doing the most clownish things. One could hardly hear his own voice, it was such bedlam. . . . If all the ridiculous things done during those two or three days were recorded, the reader would hardly believe the story. But this was Paris, and the War was over."[1]

To those who never served in the War it is always a matter of interest to learn how the news of the Armistice was received by the troops in the field. It is not an entirely easy question to answer. The War covered a great slice of Europe; conditions varied. This much, however, can be said: the scenes at the front were far different from those which marked the news of the cessation of hostilities in London and in Paris. There was none of that wild enthusiasm, of those uproarious demonstrations of relief which happened in the two capitals. The strain on the troops had been too great.

What they went through in those stupendous eight months from March to November, 1918, can never be really "put across." Exhausted by defeat in the spring, they had stood at bay, "tired men with their backs to the wall." Moving forward again in August, theirs was the exhaustion caused by ruthless pursuit of a beaten enemy. Stupefied with success, numbed, one might say, with weeks of victory, most of them simply ceased firing when the clock struck that fateful hour of eleven on the morning of November 11th, 1918, thankful that all was over, but too tired to cheer. Just an immense feeling of relief, shot through with a deep pride too fierce for words.

The Final Hour

From an almost inexhaustible source of personal narratives we can cull but two, which may be taken as representative of the two main arms, the artillery and the immortal P.B.I. Of the former, "Just before 11 a.m. all batteries opened fire. Each gunner was determined to be the last man to fire a shot at the Germans. And then in the midst of the rolling thunder of rapid fire, teams straining every nerve to throw the last shell into the breech of their gun before the 'Cease Fire' sounded, eleven o'clock struck. The first blast of the bugles pierced the air, and with the last note silence reigned. . . . There was no cheering or excitement amongst the men. They seemed too tired and no one seemed to realise that all was over." On the German side the German gunners were seen to get up and walk away—homeward.

The same absence of excitement is noticeable in a record from an Irish battalion of infantry. "The end came on the 11th November. The previous night we had been officially informed that hostilities would cease from 11 a.m. on the morrow. At about ten o'clock that morning we passed through the 2nd Hampshire Regiment and became advance guard to the brigade.

"It was a glorious morning. The route lay over broken country, sometimes by road, more often by rough tracks through thickly wooded terrain.

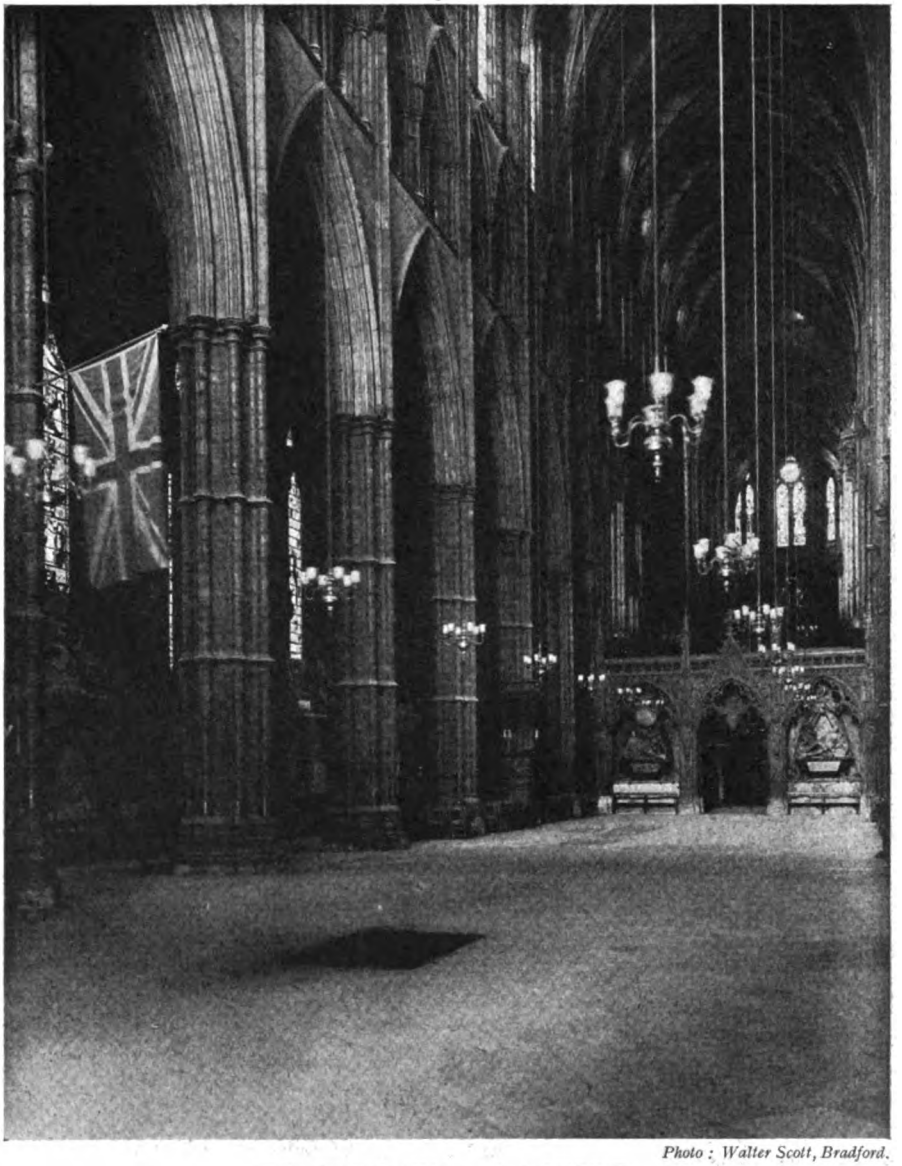

Photo: Walter Scott, Bradford.

THE SIMPLE TOMB OF A MARTYR

The Unknown Warrior's tomb lies in the nave of Westminster Abbey, and the inscription on it reads:

"Beneath this stone rests the body of a British Warrior unknown by name or rank brought from France to lie among the most Illustrious of the Land and buried here on Armistice Day—11: Nov: 1920. In the presence of His Majesty King George V., His Ministers of State, the Chiefs of His Forces, and a vast Concourse of the Nation.

"Thus are commemorated the many multitudes who during the Great War of 1914-1918 gave the most that man can give—Life itself—for God, for King and Country, for Loved Ones, Home and Empire, for the sacred cause of Justice and the Freedom of the World.

"They buried him among the kings, because he had done good toward God and toward His House."

[1] General Pershing, *My Experiences in the World War*, p. 698.

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The men were in their usual good spirits. Many discussed the situation, some arguing that the Germans were bluffing. But optimism and pessimism centred more upon the question whether or no a sequence of four rumless days would be broken. Every now and then, officers and signallers would furtively glance at their watches. At last the hands pointed to the hour.

"The words 'eleven o'clock' were passed down the column. The news was taken in silence. Then some of the men began to speak in low tones of India and of the prospect of being sent there, now that the War was over. Quite a number spoke of their dead comrades, and 'if only Colonel Murphy could be with the old battalion now.' Shortly afterwards a thin rain began to fall. The battalion moved onward in silence and soon even the sound of its footsteps died away."[1]

The World Breathes Again

The War was over, Europe was safe. The world could breathe again. Actually the armistice merely signified an interruption of hostilities, but it was clear to everyone that the last shots had been fired. No army could be got to resume fighting once its arms had been laid aside, even for a time. Besides, Germany was absolutely unable even to contemplate a resumption of the struggle, and as for her Allies—Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey—they could scarcely be said to have yet recovered consciousness.

Fearful had been the contest which had raged across the world. Nevertheless, to a generation absolutely unaccustomed to War upon a grand scale, there was a tendency to regard it as something of a class which had never yet happened in the history of mankind—certainly that had never yet happened in the history of England. But in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, England (with the exception of a brief "half-time") had been continously engaged with France for twenty-two years, in a war in which we were opposed by the greatest military genius the world has ever seen, compared with whom the Moltkes, the Falkenhayns, the Ludendorffs, and the Hindenburgs of the last war were but mere drill-sergeants.

Nevertheless, while it is well to remember all this, the Great War furnished staggering statistics. Totals were in millions. To take the British alone, in November, 1918, our Army figures amounted to over 5,000,000 of all ranks. Our casualties were roughly a million dead and two million wounded. Towards the end of the War, the cost, to us alone, was nearly £7,000,000 *a day*. The total casualties of all the combatants exceeded 36,000,000, of which number over 11,000,000 were killed. These are astronomical figures.

And it was a war in which were actively engaged Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, Greece, Roumania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Egypt, Japan, and the United States of America. Not inaccurately has it merited the name *La Guerre Mondiale*—"The World War."

Many pens have written of those last hours of the struggle; and never yet has there been a writer who could, when he laid down his pen, refrain from lifting it just once again in an endeavour to set out, in a few sentences, the impression which the sum total of the cataclysm, the full story of the whole ghastly business, the sordid mockery of civilisation, had made upon his mind. Yet no conclusion is ever reached; the summing-up always takes the form of a question; implied or expressed, there is always the refrain, "We ask and wait."

Winston Churchill's Fine Words

No writer has approached, and none can hope to rival, the imperishable prose in which Mr. Winston Churchill has faced the issue. Yet not with one, but with a series of questions, is how he is forced to complete his survey:

"The curtain falls upon the long front

[1] The former extract is from Carey and Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 257, quoting *The 56th Division*. The latter is from the *History of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regt.*, ii, pp. 478, 479.

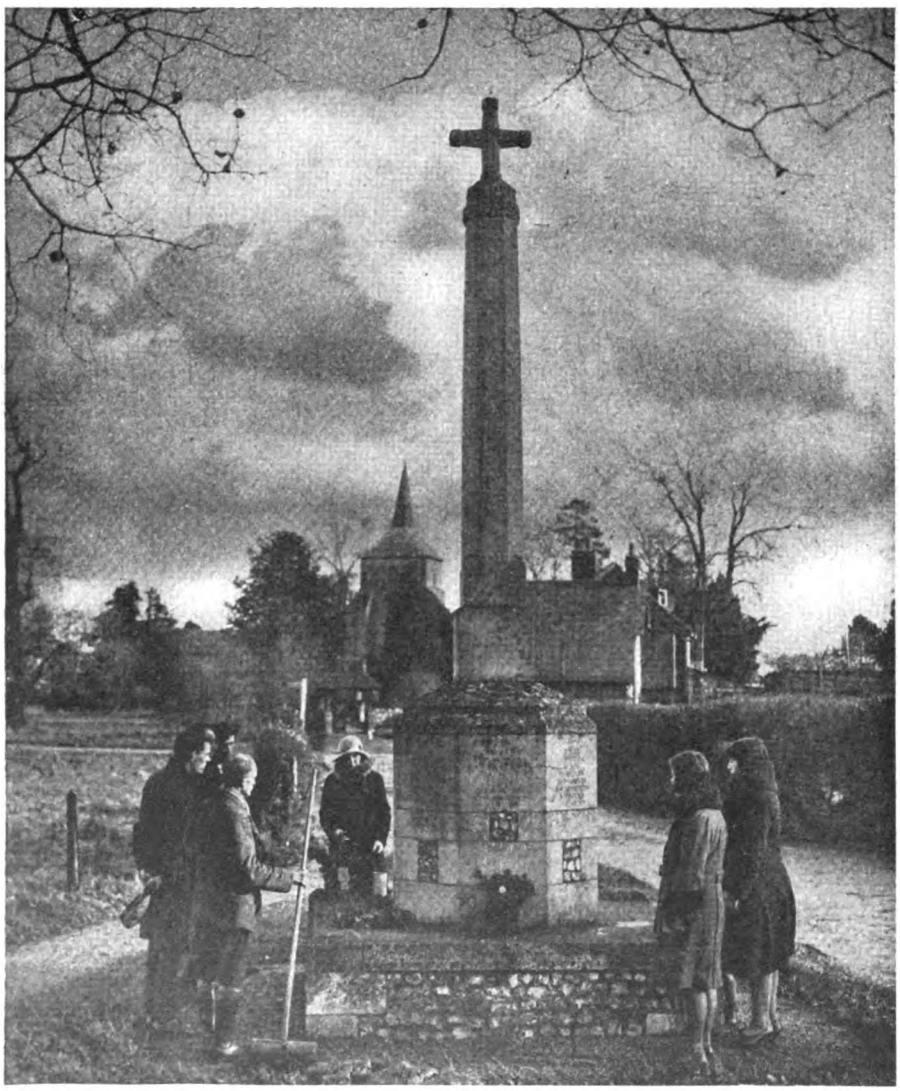

Photo: Central Press.

A VILLAGE WAR MEMORIAL

A scene typical of November 11th throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles: a little gathering of "those who are left" stand round their local shrine to observe the Two Minutes' Silence, and to remember both what was and what might have been.

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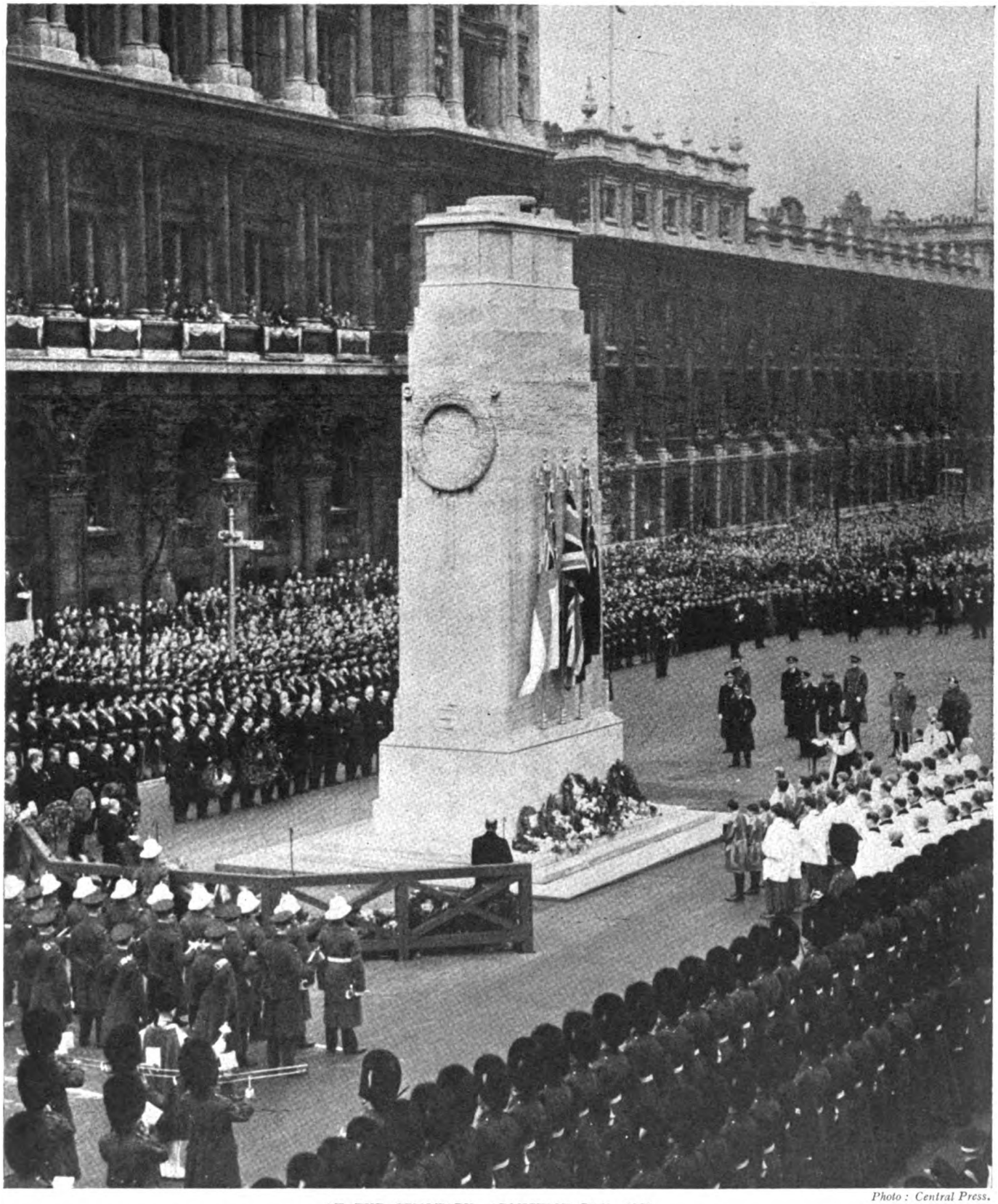

Photo : Central Press.

AT THE CENOTAPH, ARMISTICE DAY, 1936

Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, this symbol of the Empire's homage to her dead was erected in Whitehall, London, in 1920, replacing a temporary structure prepared for the Peace Procession of July 19th, 1919. The criticism has been levelled that the monument is small and unimpressive for its purpose ; but in truth its simple dignity is its main attraction, and forms a pleasant and characteristically British contrast to some of the grandiose memorials of other lands. In order that the fallen of every race and creed should be included in the tribute, the inscription simply reads : "To Our Glorious Dead."

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in France and Flanders. The soothing hands of time and Nature, the swift repair of peaceful industry, have already almost effaced the crater fields and the battle lines which in a broad belt from the Vosges to the sea lately blackened the smiling fields of France. The ruins are rebuilt, the riven trees are replaced by new plantations. Only the cemeteries, the monuments and stunted steeples, with here and there a mouldering trench or huge mine-crater lake, assail the traveller with the fact that twenty-five millions shed their blood or perished in the greatest of all human contentions but a few years ago. Merciful oblivion draws its veils; the crippled limp away; the mourners fall back into the sad twilight of memory. New youth is here to claim its rights, and the perennial stream flows forward even in the battle zone, as if the tale were all a dream.

"Is this the end? Is it to be merely a chapter in a cruel and senseless story? Will a new generation in their turn be immolated to square the black accounts of Teuton and Gaul? Will our children bleed and gasp again in devastated lands? Or will there spring from the very fires of conflict that reconciliation of the three giant combatants, which would unite their genius and secure to each in safety and freedom a share in rebuilding the glory of Europe?"[1]

We ask and wait. It is an ironic commentary upon the remorseless march of events that within a few years of Mr. Churchill's burning phrases the situation in Europe has taken upon itself a shape never foreseen by him. The "black accounts of Teuton and Gaul" are for the moment overshadowed. While surging seas of terror swept over Europe during the four years of the Great War, Spain basked in a peaceful and sunlit lagoon. To-day that lagoon is stirred in a strife from which the Great Powers of Europe find it difficult to keep themselves detached and apart. Is Europe to find itself once again divided into two great and warring camps? Is the new generation to turn from the black accounts of Teuton and Gaul to the bitter contest of the Bolshevik and the Fascist?

Whatever the reply to these questions may be—and this the future alone can disclose—the story of those dread years, 1914–1918, is sufficiently important and poignant to justify its record, in word and picture, by some of the actors in it, before the memories of the generation concerned are dimmed by the passing years.

1 Churchill, *op. cit.*, iv, p. 1234.

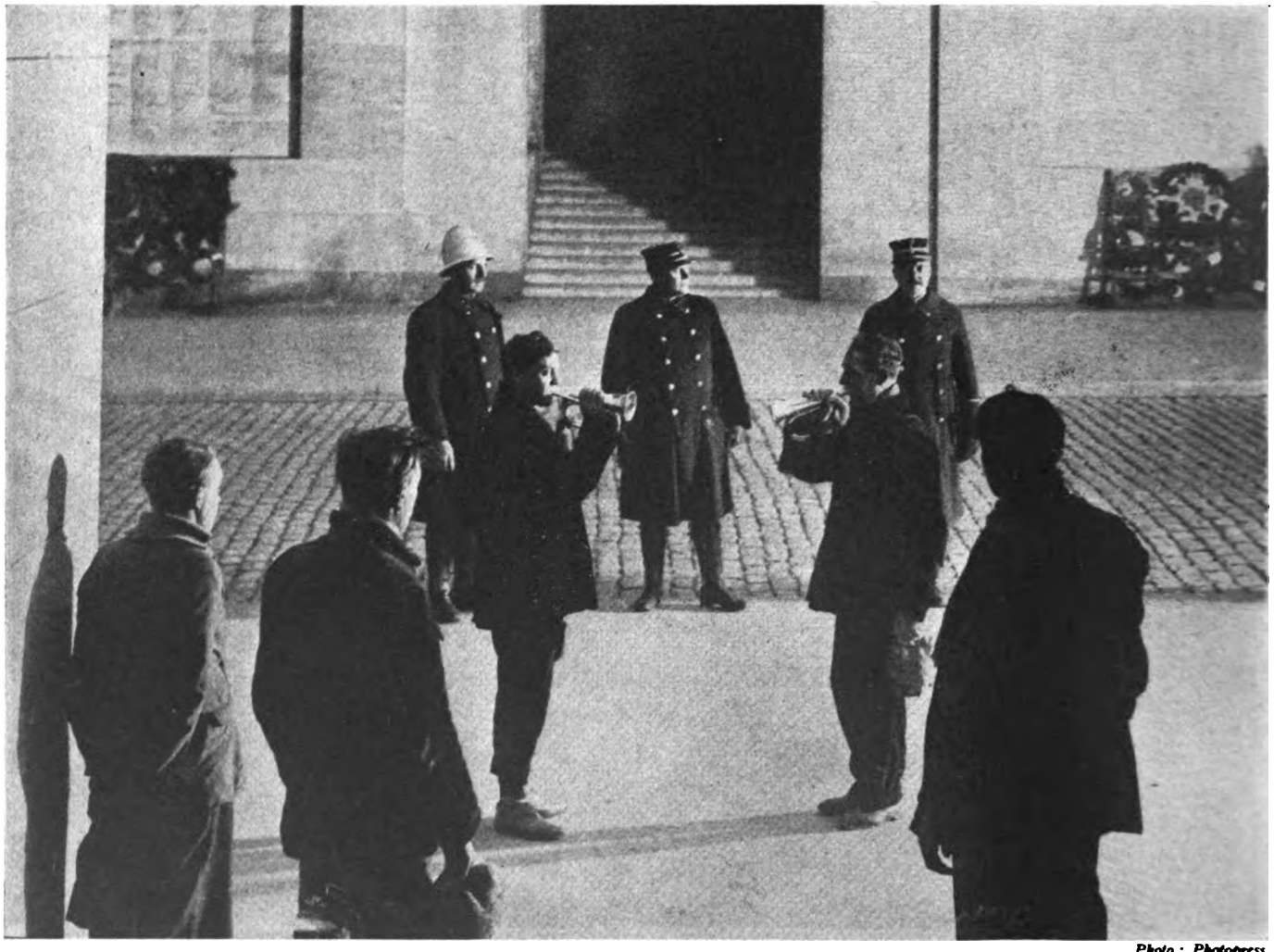

Photo: Photopress.

THE "LAST POST" AT THE MENIN GATE

With such a fitting picture we close the second volume of "Twenty Years After," bringing past and present as it were into one by the sight of this simple ceremony. Every night of the year the "Last Post" is sounded beneath the Menin Gate Memorial, the buglers being men of the Ypres Fire Brigade, the bugles silver instruments presented by the British Legion; and every night the vast panels whereon are inscribed the names of the Flanders "missing" throw back the call in a throng of echoes, as though the ghosts give thanks that we have not forgotten them.

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APPENDICES

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ERRATA

It is necessary here to draw attention to certain statements embodied in this work which, it is believed, have been made in error.

Page 12. Picture. The howitzers shown in this picture are 8-inch and not 9·2-inch as stated in the caption.

Page 19. Caption to Sanctuary Wood and Zillebeke. The pictures were taken from Hell-Blast Corner and not Hell-Fire Corner as stated.

Page 21, column 1, line 24. For the paragraph beginning " Hostilities began " read " Hostilities began within a few hours, with the sinking of a German mine-layer by British ships."

Page 21, column 1, line 51. For " 1900 " read " 1890."

Page 22, column 2, line 18. For " 1902 " read " 1900."

Page 22, column 3, line 10. The Fashoda incident occurred in 1898.

Page 23, column 1, line 7. The Russo-Japanese War ended on September 5, 1905.

Page 35, column 1, last line but one. For " battalion " read " battery."

Page 52. Picture " Cavalry Under Cover." Although this picture was so titled by the photographer, the men shown are believed to be infantrymen.

Pages 54/55. Top caption, line 3. For " from " read " for " ; lines 4/5 for " debouches into the western corner of the Grand' Place " read " terminates at the Lille Gate."

Page 81. Picture " Crossing the Marne." The troops shown here belong to " D " Company, 1st Cameronians, and not to " D " Company, 1st Cameron Highlanders, as there stated.

Page 132, column 3, under shoulder-head " Hero of Hill 60," 7 lines down. For " Whalley " read " Woolley."

Page 135, column 1, under shoulder-head " The Herts Guards," 3 lines down. Edmund Blunden's Regiment was the Royal Sussex.

Page 143, column 2. " Handicapped by Old Guns." It would appear that despite old guns the 2nd Northumbrian Brigade, R.F.A., did indeed take an active part in this battle.

Pages 174/175. Captions. Péronne was taken by the British in March, 1917. Troops of the 48th Division were responsible for its capture, and not the French as stated.

Page 236. Caption " In the Cause of Civilization." Hamel, on the Ancre, was actually just within our lines prior to July 1st, 1916. The information in this caption is therefore misleading.

Page 245. Picture and caption. An interesting correction. The picture shown here has been many times reproduced in the daily press and elsewhere. Through the help of a reader we have been able definitely to establish that the picture is not genuine. It was taken on Gallipoli, but the soldier is posed and the " cross " was, in fact, an erection designed to hold a washing-line. The picture has now been removed from the collection in the Imperial War Museum.

Page 267. Caption " Forest of Nieppe To-day," line 1. For " January 28th, 1918," read " June 28th, 1918."

Pages 270–272. A technical error occurs on these three pages. As a result three pairs of pictures are incorrectly described. The pictures described as of Monchy-le-Preux are of Feuchy ; the place described as Feuchy is actually Fampoux ; while the two pictures described as Fampoux are of Monchy-le-Preux.

Page 303. The War Memorial shown in the lower of the two pictures on this page is actually that erected to the 51st Division. It was taken on the day of its unveiling by Marshal Foch.

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Pages 322/323. Captions to pictures of Carnoy village. It is pointed out that this village was occupied by the 19th Manchesters on the material dates. Actually the Germans attacked the French position about three miles to the southward. They were driven off. Two companies of the 17th Manchesters were in support during this attack.

Page 404. Upper picture was taken by C. A. Ormesher and not by Alec Riley as stated.

Page 541. Drawing of Divisional Signs. Sign of the 35th Division was more commonly a circle composed of seven fives showing the semi-circular parts of the fives protruding outwards.

Page 678. Upper picture was taken by V. G. Sanders and not by A. Chapman as stated.

Page 691. Caption " Australians Near Armentières." In the first line for " in a front-line trench at La Croix-du-Bac " read " in a front-line trench before La Croix-du-Bac."

Page 718, column 3, line 15. For " six weeks " read " twelve weeks."

Page 746, column 1, line 1. The 38th (Welsh) Division was a Kitchener's Army formation and not Territorial as stated.

Page 974. Caption " Harley Street, Cambrin," line 1. Cambrin lies astride the Béthune—La Bassée Road and not on the south side as stated.

Page 975. Caption " No Longer a Medical Stronghold," line 3. According to information now received the original house was shelled out of existence by 5·9's early in 1916.

Pages 1004/1005. The picture on page 1004 has now been identified as showing the church at Mons-en-Chausée and not at Vraignes as stated. This photograph, therefore, has for many years remained incorrectly labelled.

Page 1084. Caption to upper picture. The man shown here is a Private of the 2/10th Battalion, Manchester Regiment, and not of the 4th Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment, as stated.

Page 1143. Caption, line 5. For " Barton Pasha " read " Borton Pasha."

Page 1161. Caption to lower picture. The tank shown here has been identified as belonging to " I " Battalion and not " C " Battalion, as stated.

Page 1178. Caption. Contalmaison appears to have been taken by troops of the 23rd Division, including the 9th Battalion. Yorkshire Regiment, a battalion of West Yorkshires, and one of Northumberland Fusiliers. The 9th Battalion. Yorkshires, were relieved by the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch.

Page 1210. Caption. The two Stokes Gunners shown here belonged to the West Yorks and not to the Yorks and Lancs as stated.

Page 1233, column 3, line 5. For " Lala Bala " read " Lala Baba."

Page 1234, column 2, line 11. For " Horne " read " Lorne."

Page 1248, column 1, lines 8–13. The 59th Division arrived in France in February, 1917. The sentence " Consequently . . . baptism of fire " is a misstatement. This division, prior to February, 1918, had seen fighting at both Ypres and Cambrai and had suffered heavy casualties.

Page 1276. Upper picture. It is now definitely established that " The Pedlars " Concert Party belonged to the 32nd Division.

Page 1295. Drawing of Regimental Badge. The word inscribed on the badge of the Gordon Highlanders is " Bydand " and not " Bynand " as drawn.

Page 1313. Upper picture. This is another case of a photograph incorrectly described. The place shown in this particular picture is Flêtre and not Villers-Bretonneux. The error was due to a wrongly-numbered negative supplied to the Imperial War Museum by the Australian Government. The great similarity between the two villages during the War has hitherto prevented detection of the mistake.

Page 1341, column 1, line 16. For " 528th " read " 128th."

Page 1344, column 1, line 23. For " XII " read " XIII."

Pages 1350/1351. Caption to lower picture, line 3. For " March, 1917 " read "March, 1916."

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MAP INDEX

Here is given a link-up between places shown in the various illustrations and the maps that follow on page 1491 *et seq.* Each map is identified by a letter and the squares thereon by a letter and a figure.

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Warfusée-Abancourt, 469, 476, 477, 551	H	E3
Warlencourt, 198, 524	G	C2
W-Beach, 297, 406, 407, 422, 1225	N	E2
Wervicq, 1138, 1139	A	E6
Westhoek, 92, 1191	A	C4
Wieltje, 82, 108, 286	A	C4
Wimereux, 1112	J	D1
Wulverghem, 127	A	F3
Wytschaete, 364, 450, 451, 943, 1346	A	E3
X-Beach, 409, 473, 1230	N	E2
Y-Beach, 409, 1226	N	E2
Yenikeui, 785, 791	V	D5
Ypres, 4, 11, 12, 17, 53, 54, 55, 56, 86, 87, 94, 100, 102, 139, 314, 315, 1204, 1209, 1323, 1359, 1398, 1399, 1407, 1484	A	D3
Zandvoorde, 76	A	D5
Zillebeke, 19, 114, 124, 148, 675, 1116	A	D4
Zonnebeke, 5, 90, 104, 105, 107, 284, 285, 1359	A	C5
Zuydschoote, 1085	A	B2

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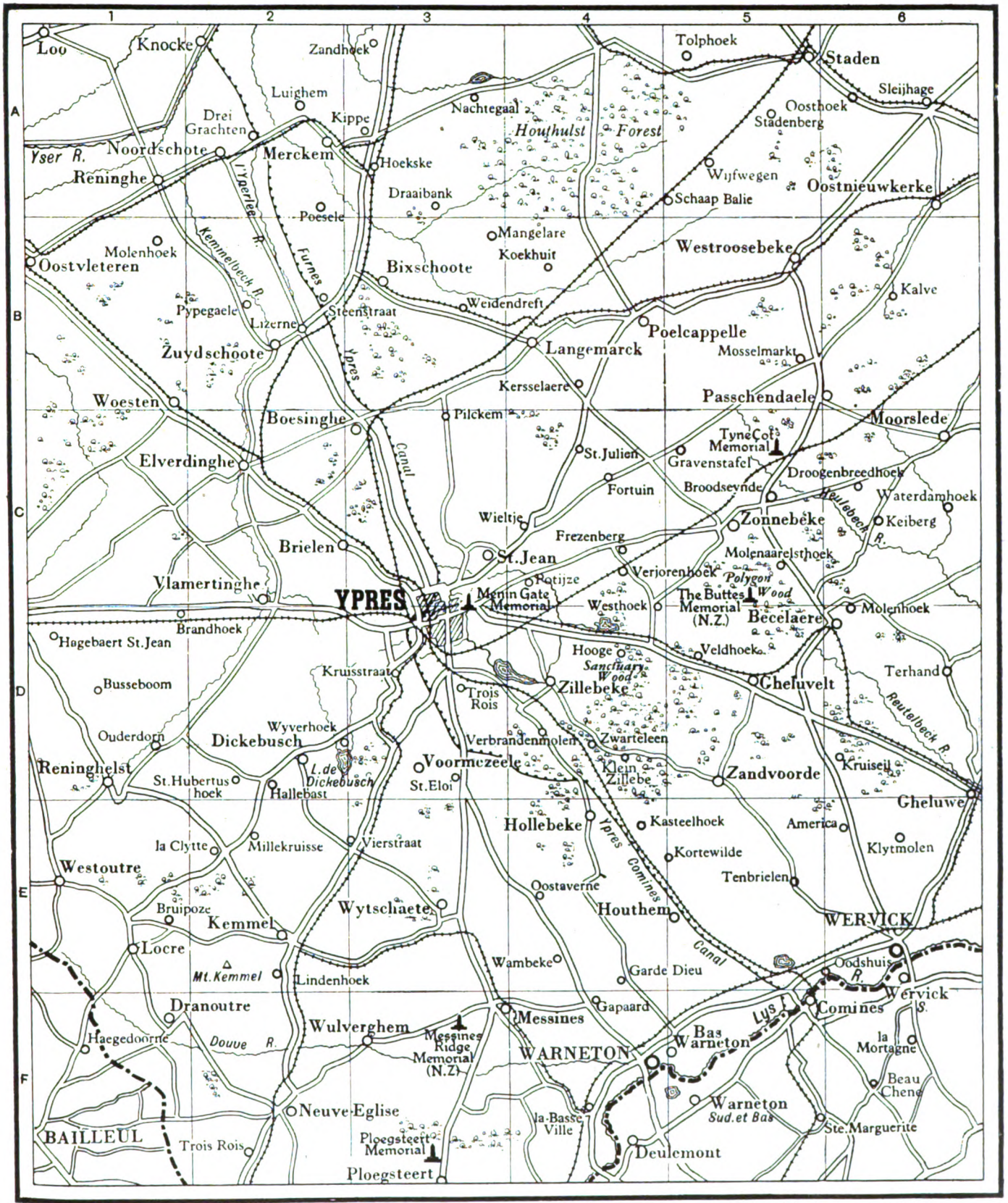
WESTERN FRONT. YPRES

MAP A



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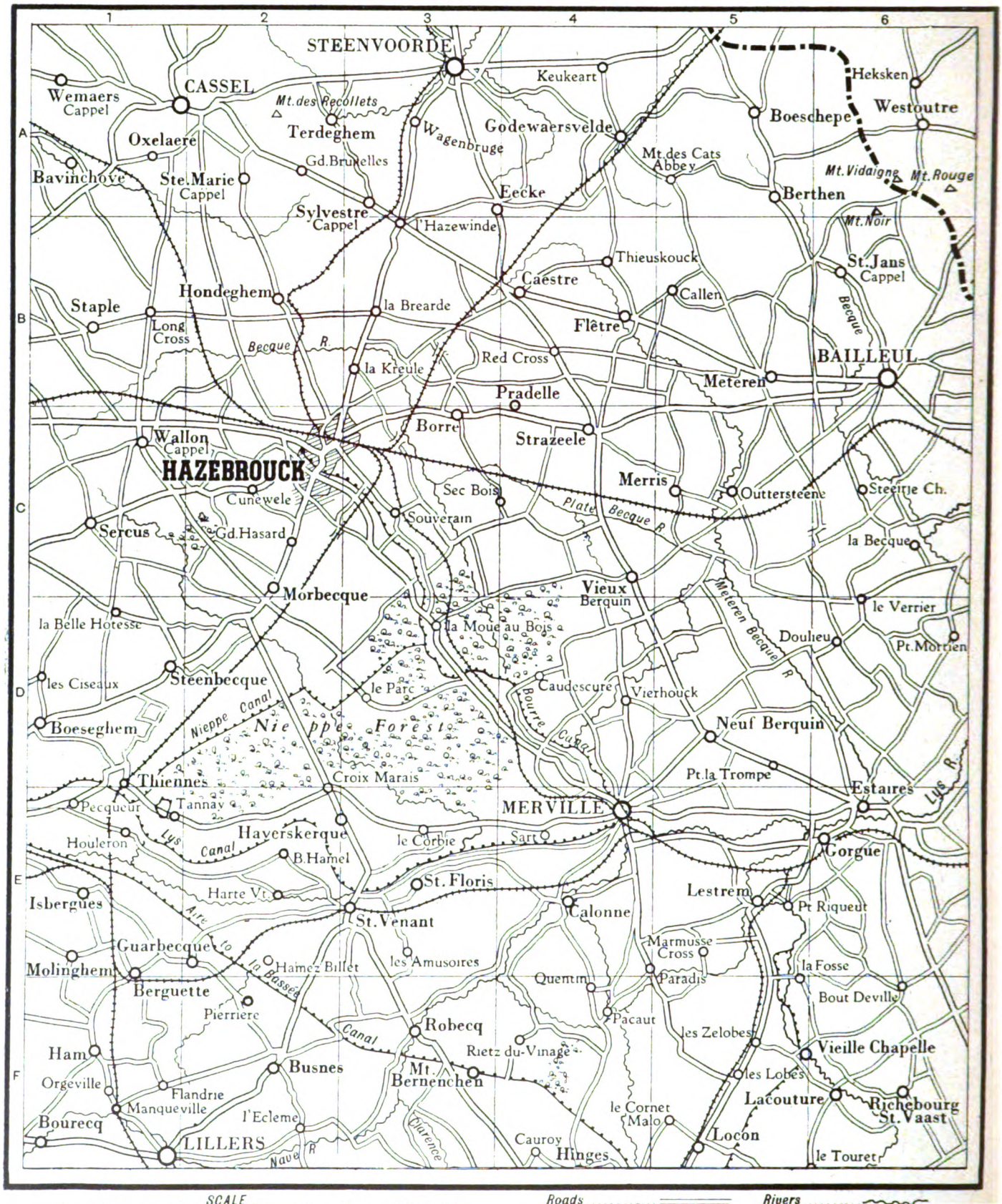
MAP B

WESTERN FRONT. HAZEBROUCK—BAILLEUL



SCALE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Kilometres

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Roads

Railways

Canals

Rivers

Lakes

Forests

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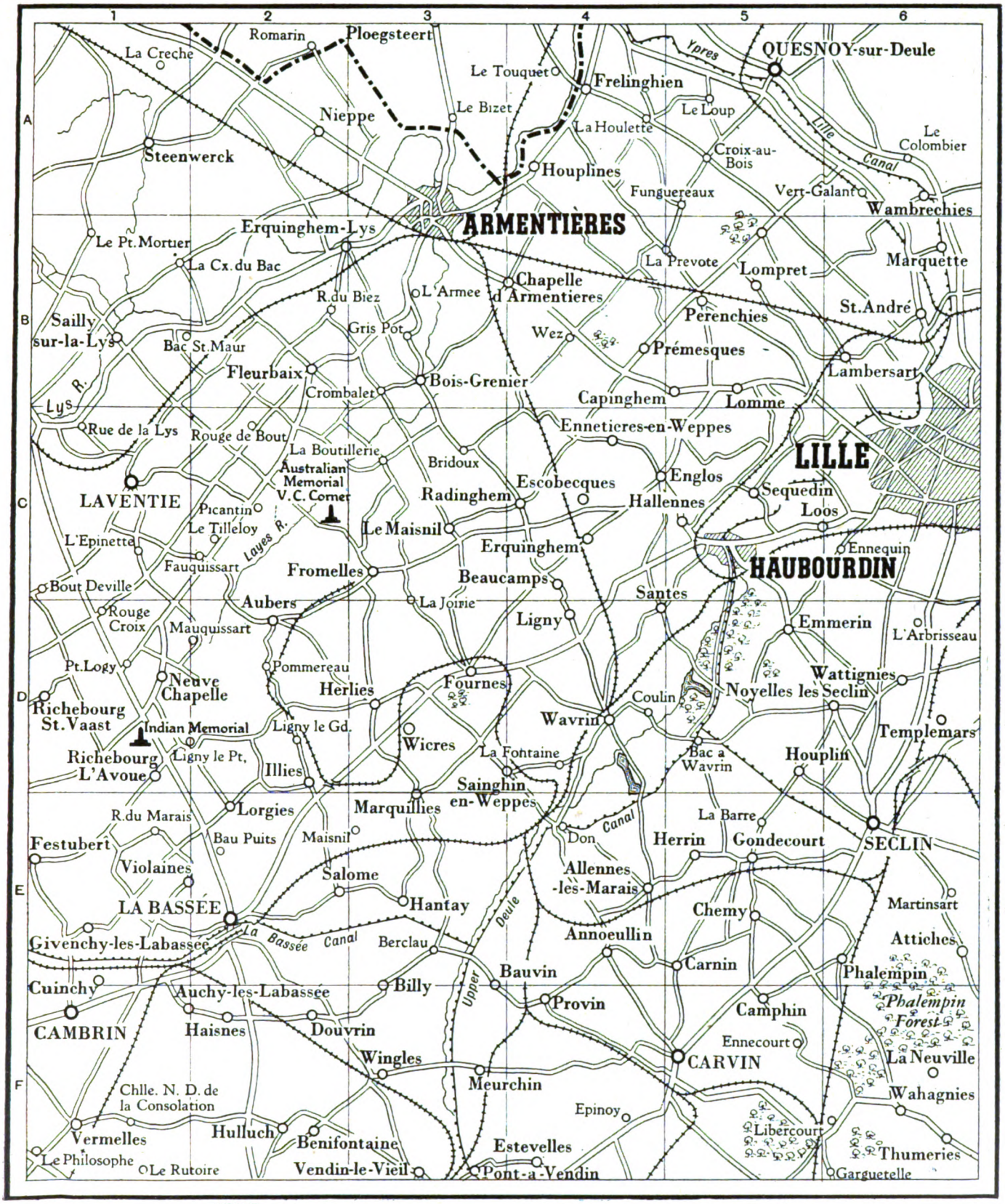
WESTERN FRONT. ARMENTIÈRES—LA BASSÉE MAP C



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Roads
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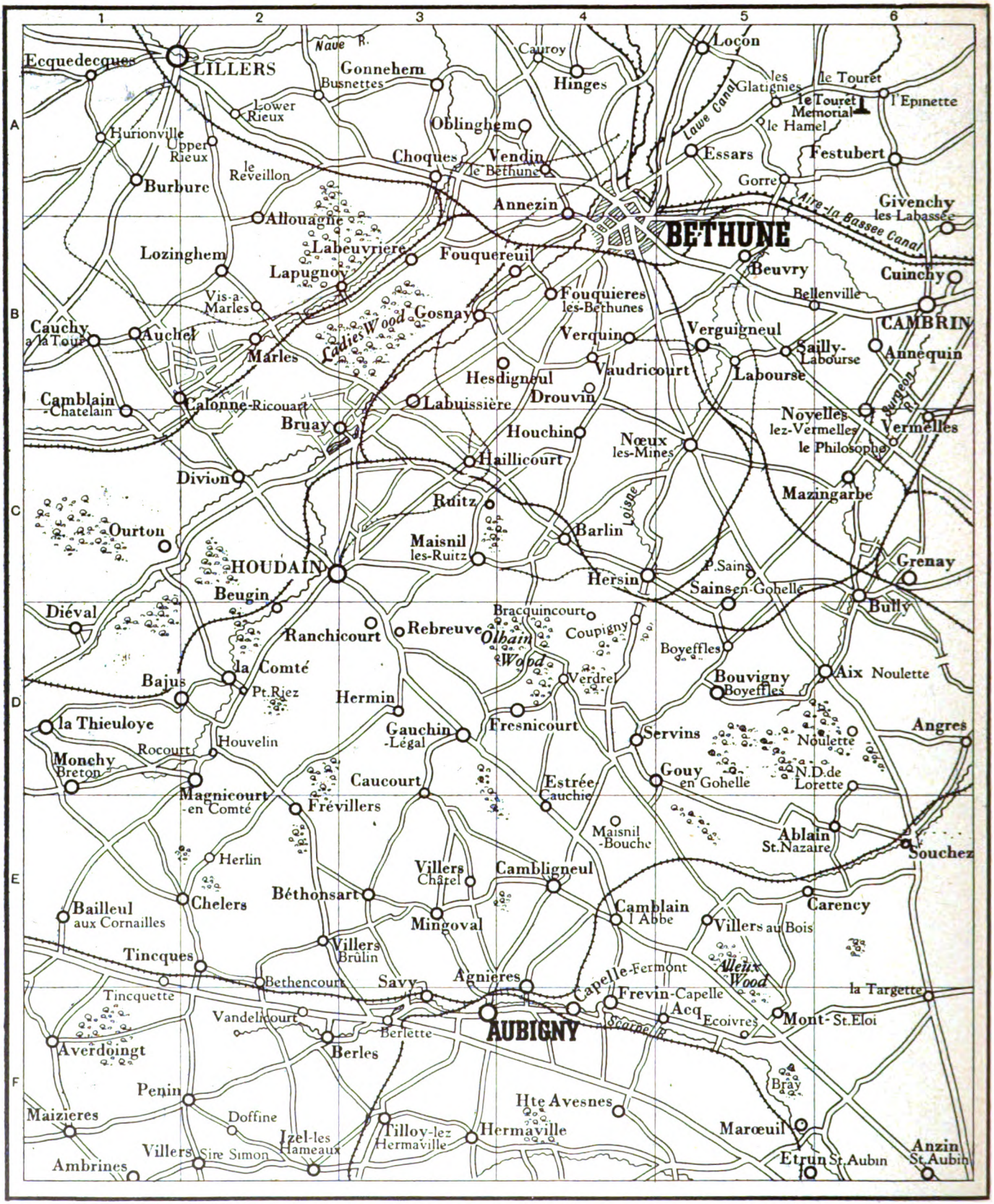
WESTERN FRONT. BÉTHUNE—AUBIGNY



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0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Roads
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Canals
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Forests

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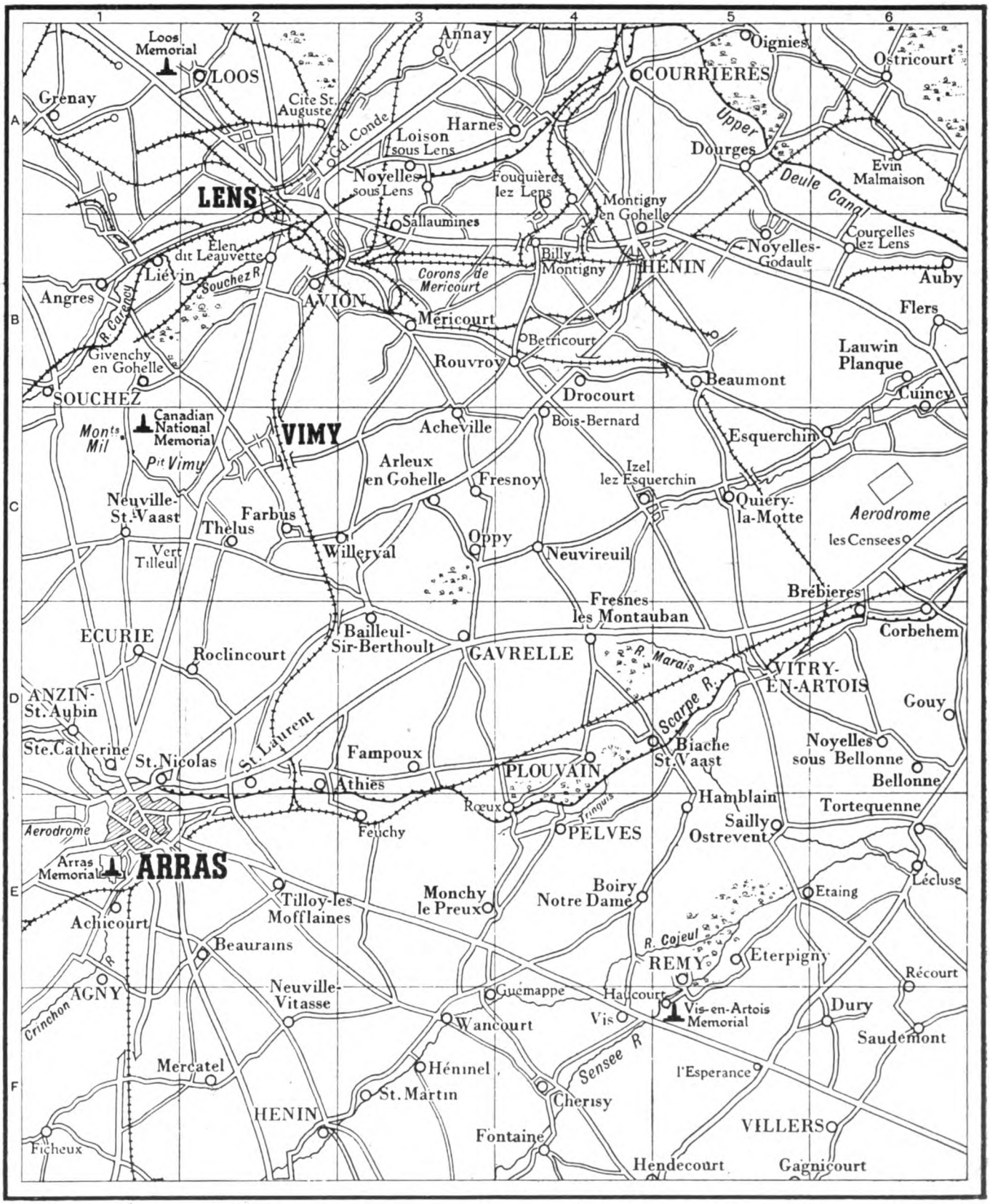
WESTERN FRONT. VIMY—ARRAS

MAP E



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Roads

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Rivers

Lakes

Forests

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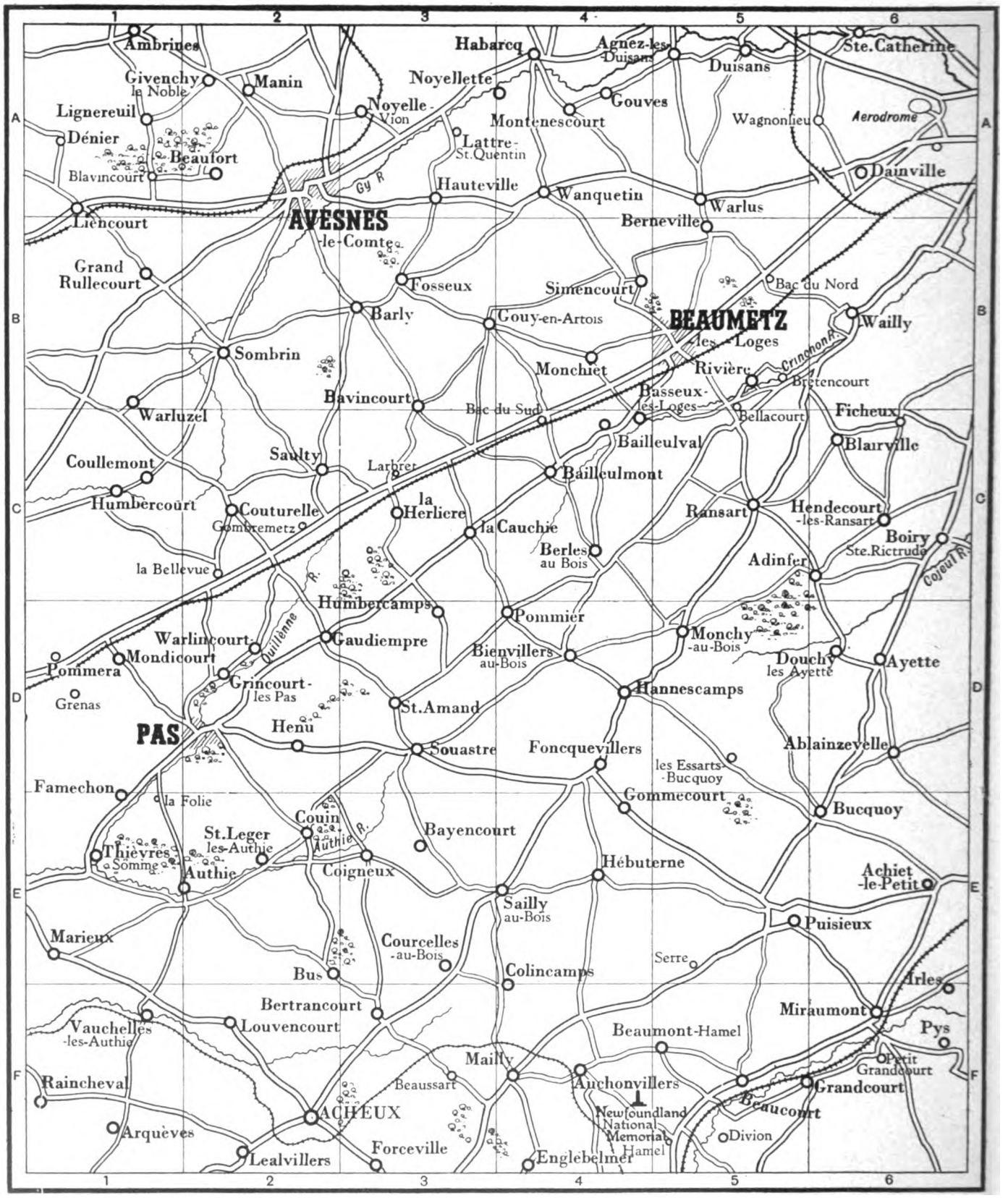
WESTERN FRONT. AVESNES—PAS



SCALE

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0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Roads

Railways

Canals

Rivers

Lakes

Forests

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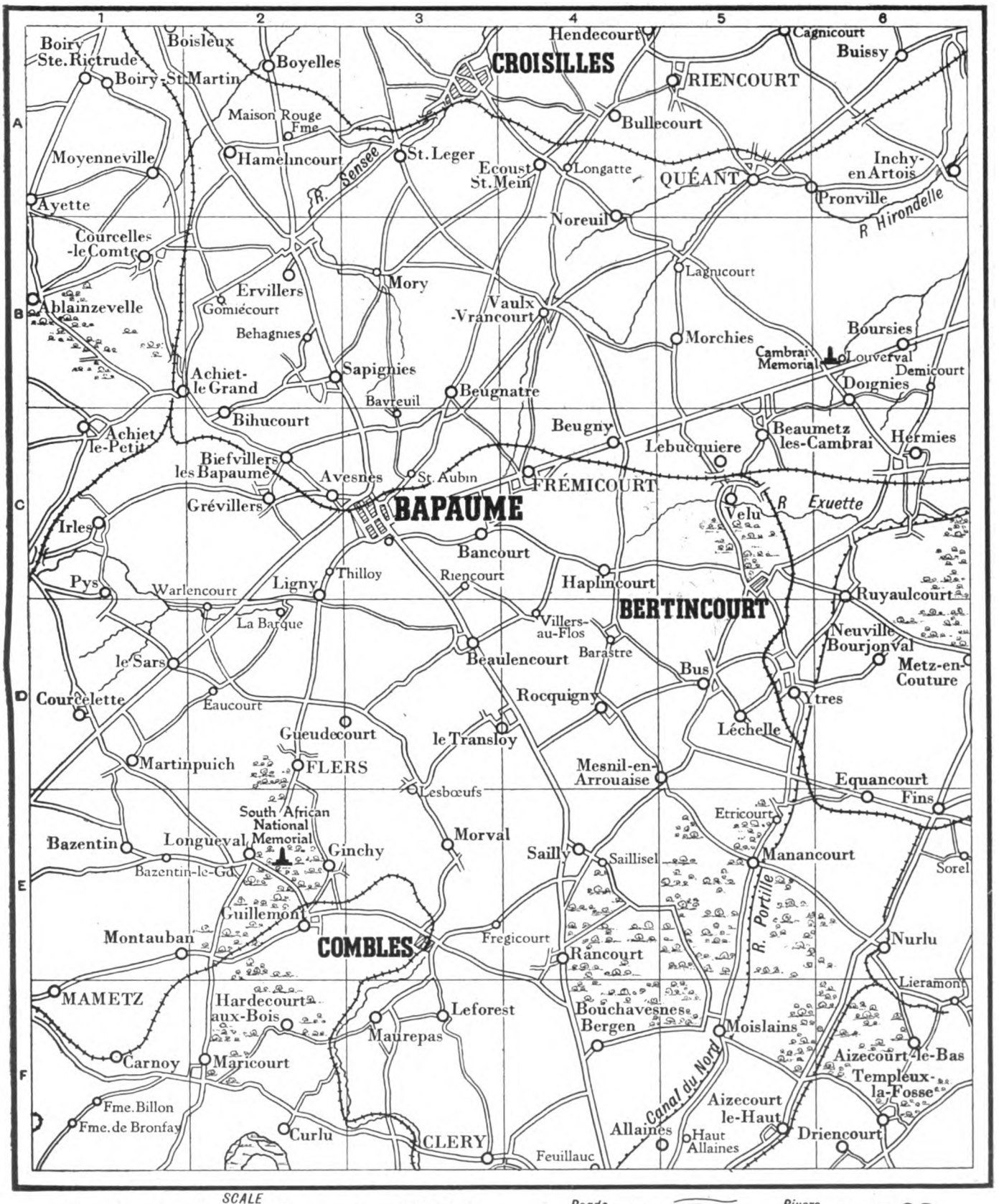

SCALE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Kilometres

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Roads
Railways
Canals
Rivers
Lakes
Forests

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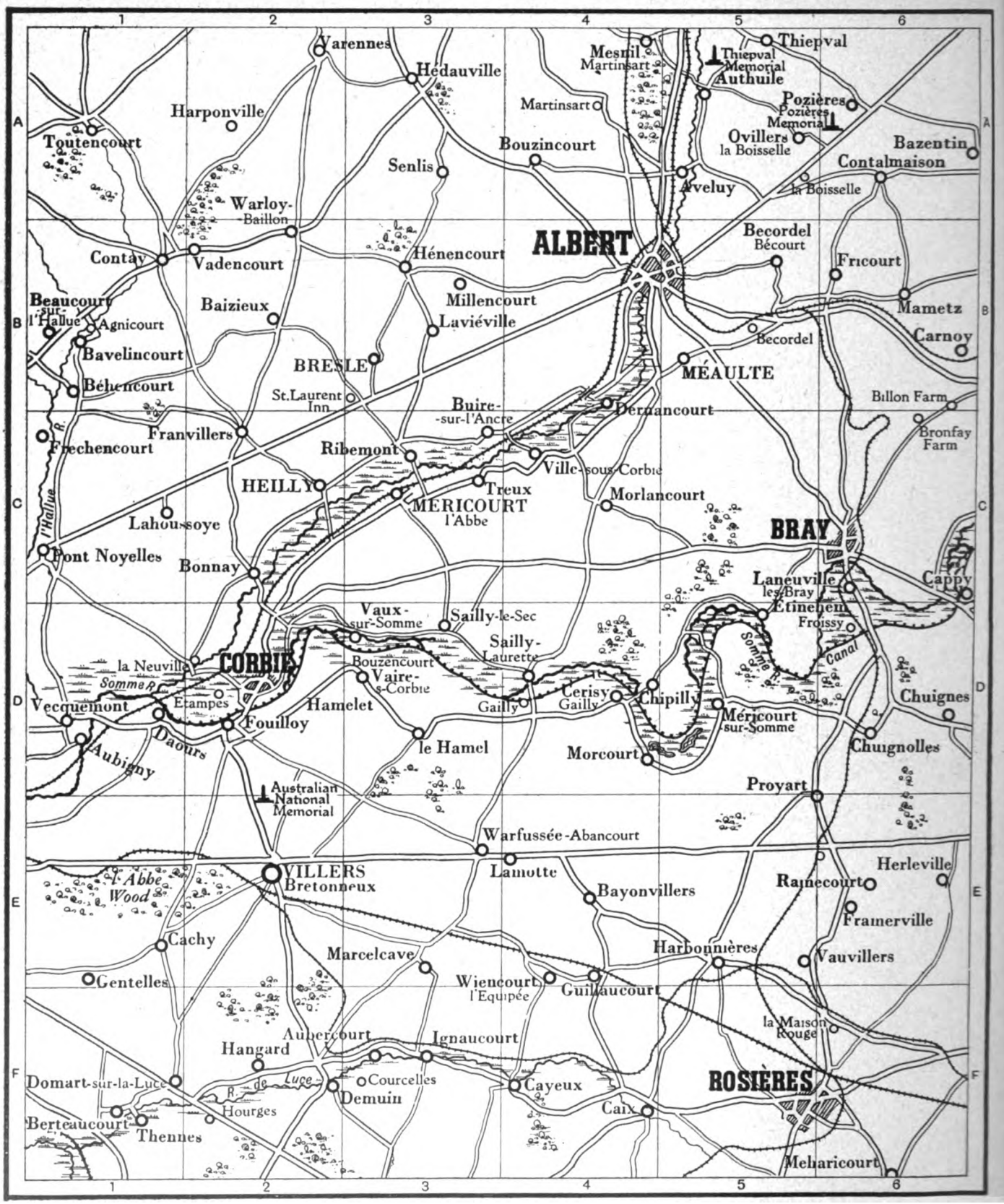
WESTERN FRONT. ALBERT—CORBIE



SCALE

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0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Roads ..... Rivers .....

Railways ..... Lakes .....

Canals ..... Marshes ..... Forests .....

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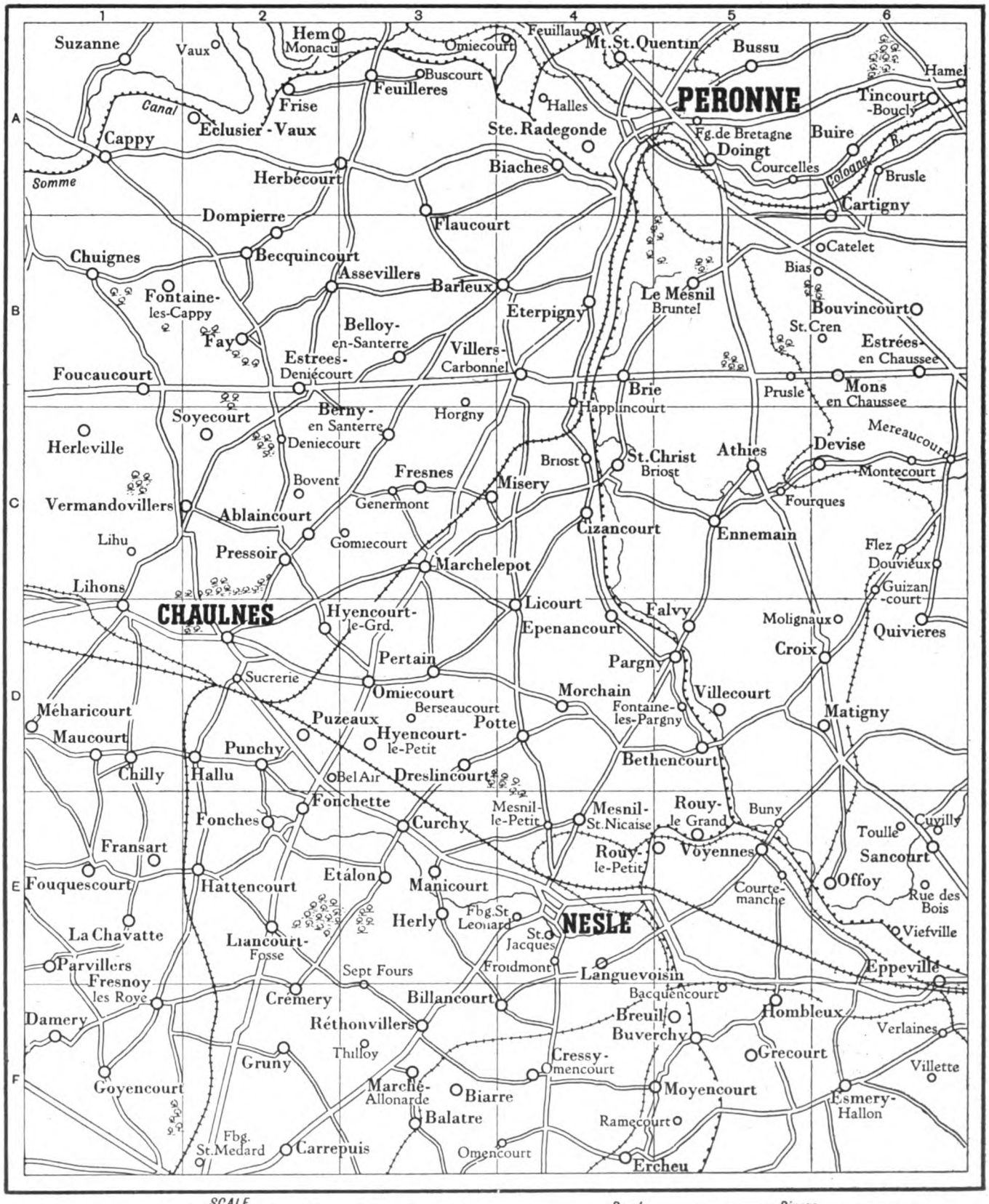


SCALE
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Kilometres
0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Roads
Railways
Canals
Rivers
Lakes
Forests

Digitized by Google

WESTERN FRONT. CALAIS—BOULOGNE

SCALE

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 Kilometres

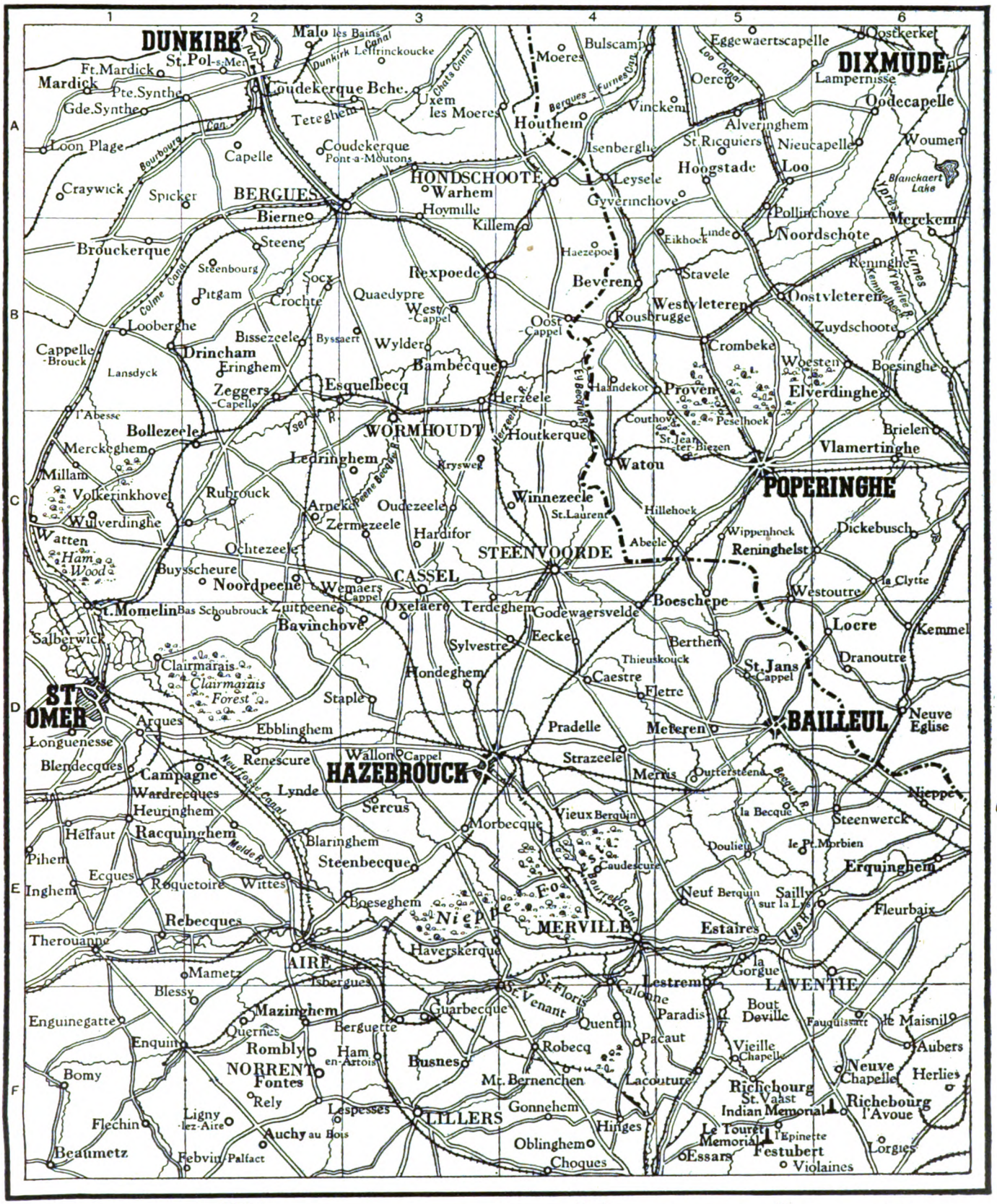
0 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

Roads
Railways
Canals
Rivers
Lakes
Forests

Digitized by Google

WESTERN FRONT. DUNKIRK—HAZEBROUCK

MAP K



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MAP J

WESTERN FRONT. CALAIS—BOULOGNE

SCALE

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 Kilometres

0 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

Roads

Railways

Canals

Rivers

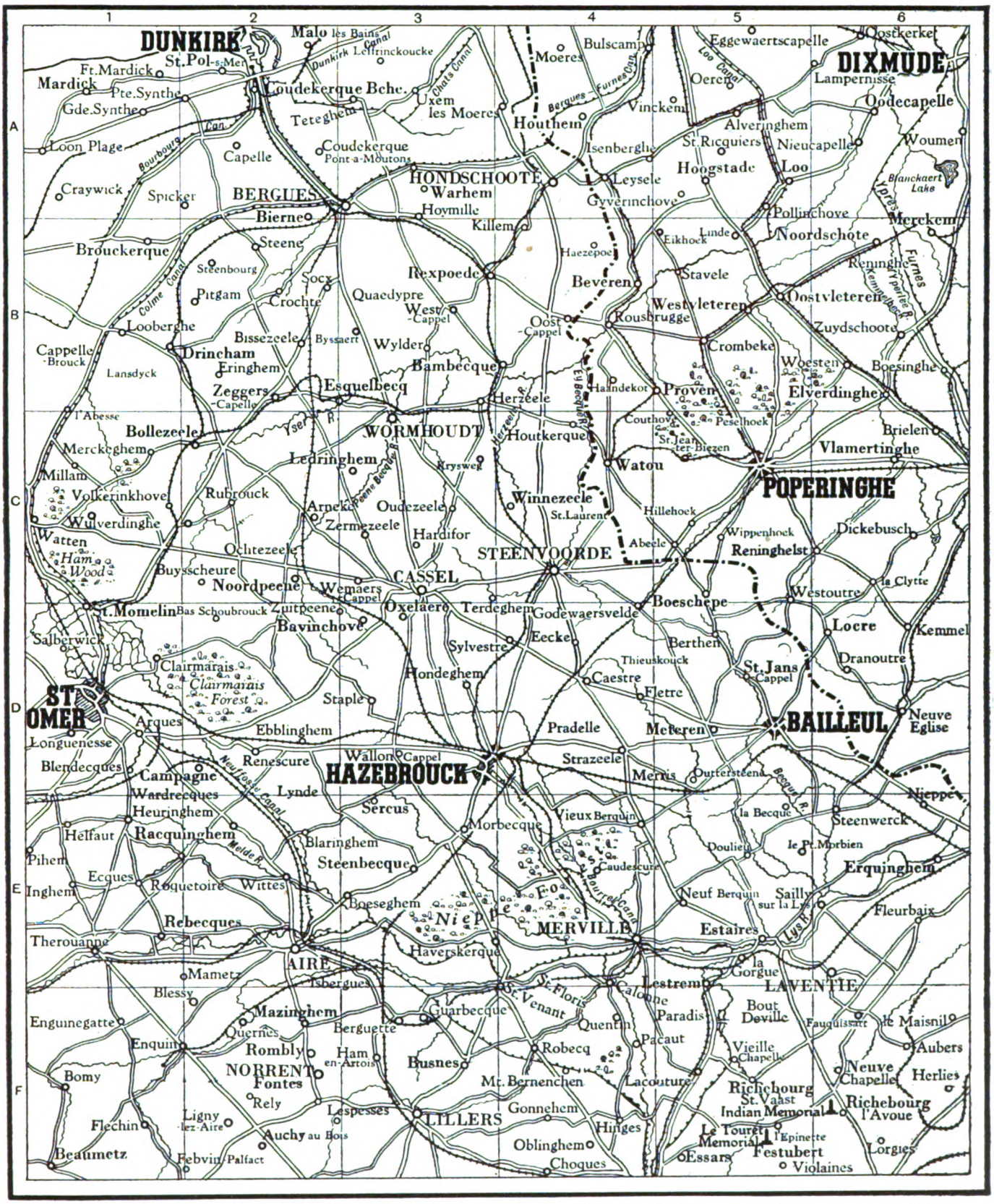
Lakes

Forests

Digitized by Google

WESTERN FRONT. DUNKIRK—HAZEBROUCK

MAP K



SCALE

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0 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

Roads

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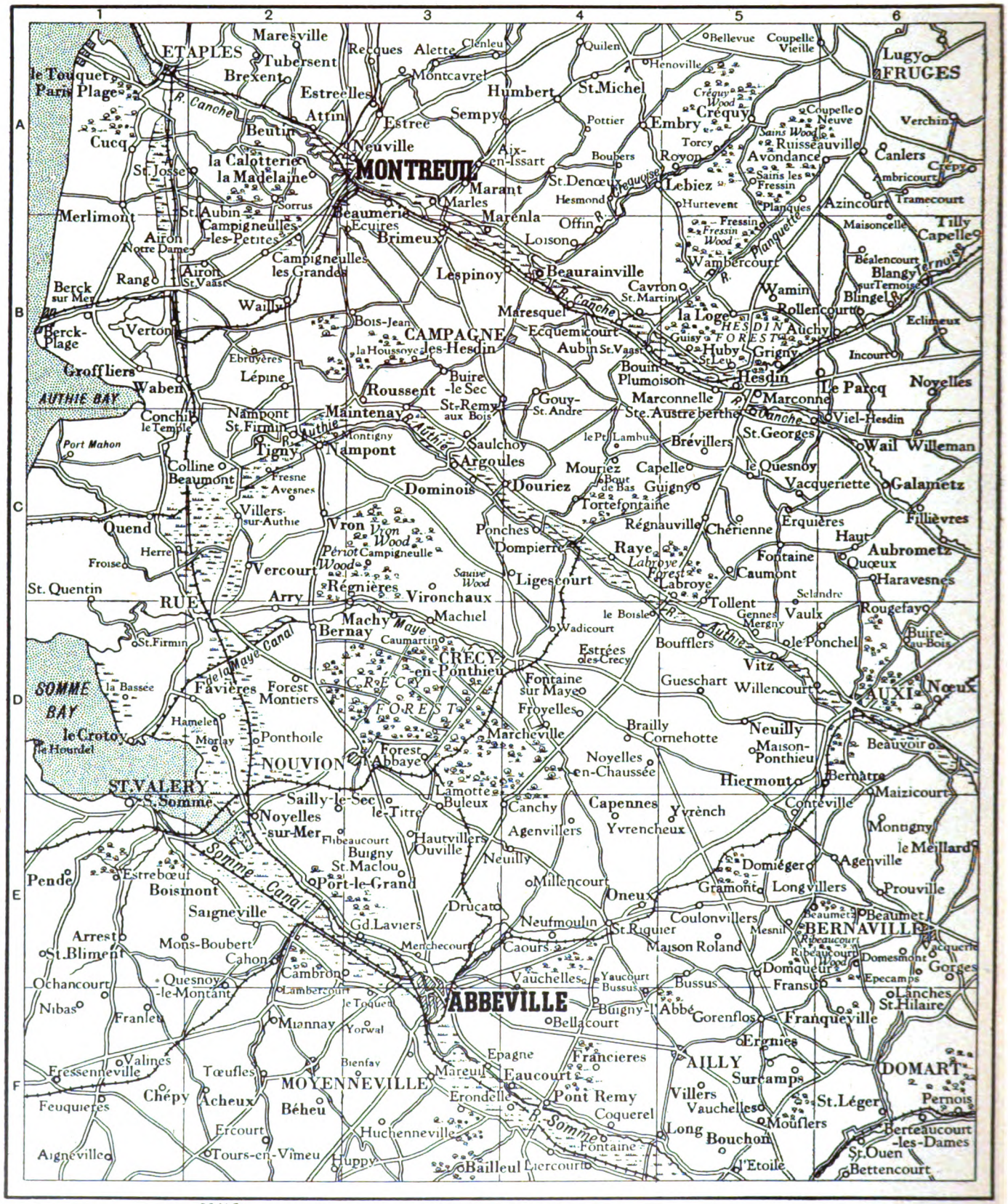
Lakes

Forests

Digitized by Google

WESTERN FRONT. MONTREUIL—ABBEVILLE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ETAPLES
le Touquet Paris Plage
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Berck sur Mer
Berck-Plage
Groffliers
Waben
AUTHIE BAY
Conchil le Temple
Port Mahon
Colline Beaumont
Quend
Froise
St. Quentin
RUE
St. Firmin
SOMME BAY
le Crotoy
la Hourdel
la Bassée
Favières
Hamelet
Morlay
Ponthoile
ST. VALERY s. Somme
Pende
Estreboeuf
Boismont
Saigneville
Arrest
St. Blimont
Ochancourt
Nibas
Franleu
Valines
Fressenneville
Feuquieres
Chépy
Tœufles
Acheux
Béheu
Ercourt
Aigneville
Tours-en-Vimeu
MOYENNEVILLE
Bienfay
Huchenneville
Huppy
Bailleul
Epagne
Mareuil
Erondelle
Francieres
Eaucourt
Pont Remy
Coquerel
Fontaine
Liercourt
ABBEVILLE
Vauchelles
Yaucourt Bussus
Bussus
Buigny-l'Abbé
Bellacourt
Miannay
Yorval
le Toquet
Lambercourt
Cambron
Quesnoy-le-Montant
Mons-Boubert
Cahon
Merlicheourt
Caours
Gd. Laviers
Drucat
Neufmoulin
St. Riquier
Maison Roland
Coulonvillers
Mesnil
Domqueur
Fransu
Gorenflos
Franqueville
Ergnies
AILLY
Surcamps
Villers
Vauchelles
Mouflers
St. Léger
DOMART
Pernois
Berteaucourt-les-Dames
St. Ouen
Bettencourt
Long
Bouchon
l'Etoile
Yvrench
Yvrencheux
Capennes
Canchy
Agenvillers
Hautvillers
Ouville
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Millencourt
Oneux
Gramont
Longvillers
Prouville
Domiéger
Agenville
le Meillard
Monuigny
Maizicourt
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Fillièvres
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Forest
Labroye
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Régnières
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Vercourt
Vron
Vron Wood
Périot Wood
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Villers-sur-Authie
Fresne
Avesnes
Dominois
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Tortefontaine
Mouriez
Capelle
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Guigny
le Quesnoy
Vacqueriette
Galametz
Wail
Willeman
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St. Georges
le Pt. Lambus
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Tigny
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Maintenay
Montigny
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Gouy-St. André
Marconnelle
Ste. Austreberthe
Marconne
Viel-Hesdin
Le Parcq
Noyelles
Bouin Plumoison
Huby St. Leu
Grigny
Incourt
Hesdin
Lépine
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Grigny
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Blangy sur Ternoise
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Tramecourt
Ambricourt
Crepy
Canlers
Verchin
Ruisseauville
Avondance
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Fressin
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Torcy
Royon
Embry
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Sains Wood
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Lugy
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Quilen
Pottier
Boubers
St. Denœux
Hesmond
Offin R.
Marenla
Loison
Beaurainville
Cavron St. Martin
Ecquemicourt
Aubin St. Vaast
Maresquel
Lespinoy
Beaumerie
Ecuires
Brimeux
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Marant
Aix-en-Issart
St. Michel
Humbert
Sempy
Estrée
Estrecelles
Attin
Beutin
Neuville
la Calotterie
la Madelaine
Sorrus
St. Josse
St. Aubin
Campigneulles-les-Petites
Campigneulles les Grandes
Airon Notre Dame
Airon St. Vaast
Rang
Wailly
Bois-Jean
CAMPAGNE les-Hesdin
la Houssoye
Verton
Maresquel
Ecquemicourt
Aubin St. Vaast
Lanche R.
la Loge
HESDIN FOREST
Guisy
Huby St. Leu
Auchy
Wamin
Rollencourt
Eclimeux
Blingel
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Wailly
Bois-Jean
CAMPAGNE les-Hesdin
la Houssoye
Verton
Berck sur Mer
Berck-Plage
Groffliers
Waben
AUTHIE BAY
Conchil le Temple
Port Mahon
Colline Beaumont
Quend
Froise
St. Quentin
RUE
St. Firmin
SOMME BAY
le Crotoy
la Hourdel
la Bassée
Favières
Hamelet
Morlay
Ponthoile
ST. VALERY s. Somme
Pende
Estreboeuf
Boismont
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Acheux
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Aigneville
Tours-en-Vimeu
MOYENNEVILLE
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Huchenneville
Huppy
Bailleul
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Fontaine
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ABBEVILLE
Vauchelles
Yaucourt Bussus
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Bellacourt
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le Toquet
Lambercourt
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St. Riquier
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Oneux
Gramont
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le Meillard
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Raye
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Ponches
Ligescourt
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Capelle
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Roussent
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Marconnelle
Ste. Austreberthe
Marconne
Viel-Hesdin
Le Parcq
Noyelles
Bouin Plumoison
Huby St. Leu
Grigny
Incourt
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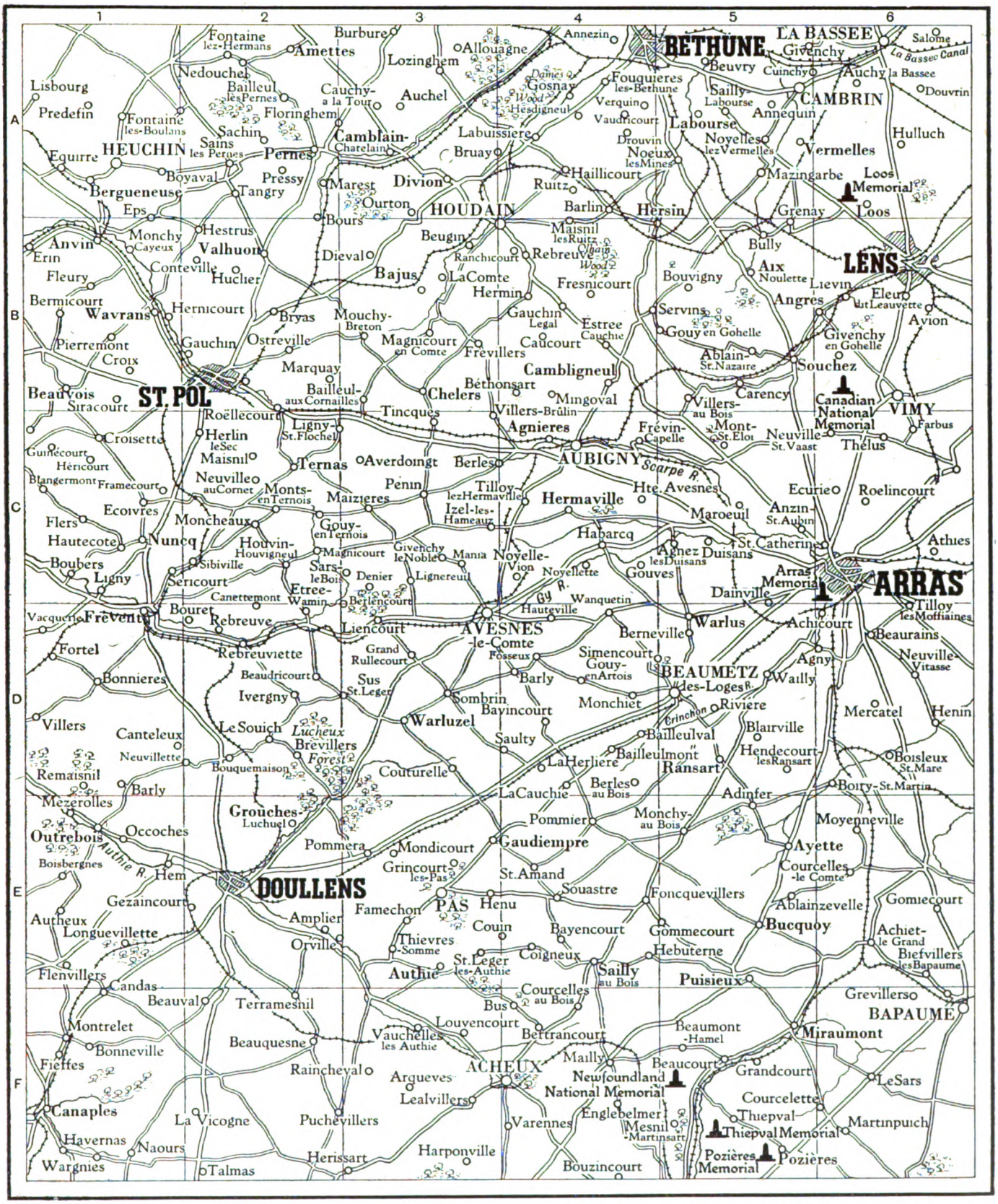
Ebruyères
Grigny
Wamin
Rollencourt
Auchy

WESTERN FRONT. ST. POL—DOULLENS

MAP M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BETHUNE
LA BASSEE
Salome
La Bassee Canal
Givenchy
Beuvry
Cuinchy
Auchy la Bassee
Douvrin
CAMBRIN
Annequin
Hulluch
Vermelles
Loos Memorial
Loos
Mazingarbe
Grenay
LENS
Aix Noulette
Lievin
Eleu dit Leauvette
Avion
Angres
Bully
Servins
Gouy en Gohelle
Givenchy en Gohelle
Souchez
Canadian National Memorial
VIMY
Farbus
Neuville St. Vaast
Thelus
Carency
Ablain St. Nazaire
Villers-au Bois
Mont-St. Eloi
Frevin-Capelle
Roclincourt
Ecurie
Anzin-St. Aubin
Maroeuil
Hte. Avesnes
Athies
St. Catherine
Agnez lesDuisans
Duisans
Gouves
Arras Memorial
ARRAS
Dainville
Tilloy lesMoffiaines
Achicourt
Beaurains
Neuville-Vitasse
Agny
Wailly
Beaumetz-les-Loges
Riviere
Blairville
Mercatel
Henin
Boisleux St. Mare
Boiry-St. Martin
Adinfer
Hendecourt lesRansart
Ransart
Bailleulmont
Bailleulval
Monchiet
Monchy-au Bois
Moyenneville
Ayette
Courcelles-le Comte
Gomiecourt
Achiet-le Grand
Biefvillers lesBapaume
Bucquoy
Ablainzevelle
Foncquevillers
Gommecourt
Hebuterne
Puisieux
Grevillers
BAPAUME
Miraumont
Beaumont-Hamel
Beaucourt
Grandcourt
LeSars
Courcelette
Thiepval
Thiepval Memorial
Martinpuich
Pozières
Pozières Memorial
Bouzincourt
Mesnil-Martinsart
Englebelmer
Varennes
Newfoundland National Memorial
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Louvencourt
Vauchelles les Authie
Bertrancourt
Courcelles au Bois
Bus
Authie
St. Leger les-Authie
Coigneux
Sailly au Bois
Thievres-Somme
Orville
Amplier
Famechon
PAS
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Couin
Bayencourt
Souastre
St. Amand
Grincourt les-Pas
Pommera
Mondicourt
Gaudiempre
Pommier
Grouches-Luchuel
Couturelle
LaCauchie
Berles au Bois
LaHerliere
Sailly
Saulty
Warluzel
Sombrin
Bayincourt
Barly
Sus St. Leger
Ivergny
Beaudricourt
Rebreuviette
Grand Rullecourt
Fosseux
Simencourt
Gouy-en Artois
Berneville
Warlus
AVESNES-le-Comte
Lieucourt
Rebreuve
Bouret
Frevent
Vacquerie
Etree-Wamin
Berlencourt
Canettemont
Sericourt
Sibiville
Houvin-Houvigneul
Magnicourt
Givenchy leNoble
Mania
Noyelle-Vion
Noyellette
Wanquetin
Hauteville
Gy R.
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Hermaville
Izel-les-Hameau
Tilloy-lezHermaville
Penin
Berles
AUBIGNY
Scarpe R.
Averdoingt
Ternas
Maizieres
Monts-en Ternois
Neuville au Cornet
Framecourt
Blangermont
Guinecourt
Hericourt
Maisnil
Herlin leSec
Croisette
Ligny St. Flochel
Roellecourt
Tincques
Agnieres
Chelers
Bethonsart
Mingoval
Villers-Brûlin
Cambligneul
Marquay
Bailleul-aux Cornailles
Ostreville
Magnicourt en Comte
Frevillers
Caucourt
Estree Cauchie
Gauchin Legal
Hermin
Fresnicourt
Rebreuve Ranchicourt
Beugin
Maisnil lesRuitz
Ruitz
Barlin
Hersin
Haillicourt
Bajus
LaComte
Dieval
Bours
Ourton
HOUDAIN
Marest
Divion
Tangry
Pressy
Camblain-Chatelain
Labuissiere
Bruay
Auchel
Cauchy-a la Tour
Floringhem
Pernes
Sains les Pernes
Sachin
Fontaine les-Boulans
HEUCHIN
Boyaval
Bergueneuse
Eps
Equirre
Predefin
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Amettes
Burbure
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Gosnay
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Verquin
Vaudricourt
Drouvin
Noeux lesMines
Labourse
Sailly-Labourse
Noyelles lezVermelles
Douvrin
Monchy Cayeux
Hestrus
Valhuon
Conteville
Huclier
Anvin
Erin
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Gauchin
Ostreville
Bryas
Mouchy-Breton
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Caucourt
Frevillers
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Villers-au Bois
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Neuville St. Vaast
Thelus
Canadian National Memorial
VIMY
Farbus
Avion
Angres
Eleu dit Leauvette
Lievin
Aix Noulette
Bully
LENS
Loos
Loos Memorial
Mazingarbe
Grenay
Hersin
Barlin
Haillicourt
Ruitz
Maisnil lesRuitz
Rebreuve Ranchicourt
Beugin
Bajus
LaComte
Dieval
Bours
Ourton
HOUDAIN
Marest
Divion
Tangry
Pressy
Camblain-Chatelain
Labuissiere
Bruay
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Sachin
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HEUCHIN
Boyaval
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Eps
Equirre
Predefin
Lisbourg
Bailleul lesPernes
Nedouchel
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Lozinghem
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Verquin
Vaudricourt
Drouvin
Noeux lesMines
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Adinfer
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Ransart
Bailleulmont
Bailleulval
Monchiet
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Ayette
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Couin
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St. Amand
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MAP N

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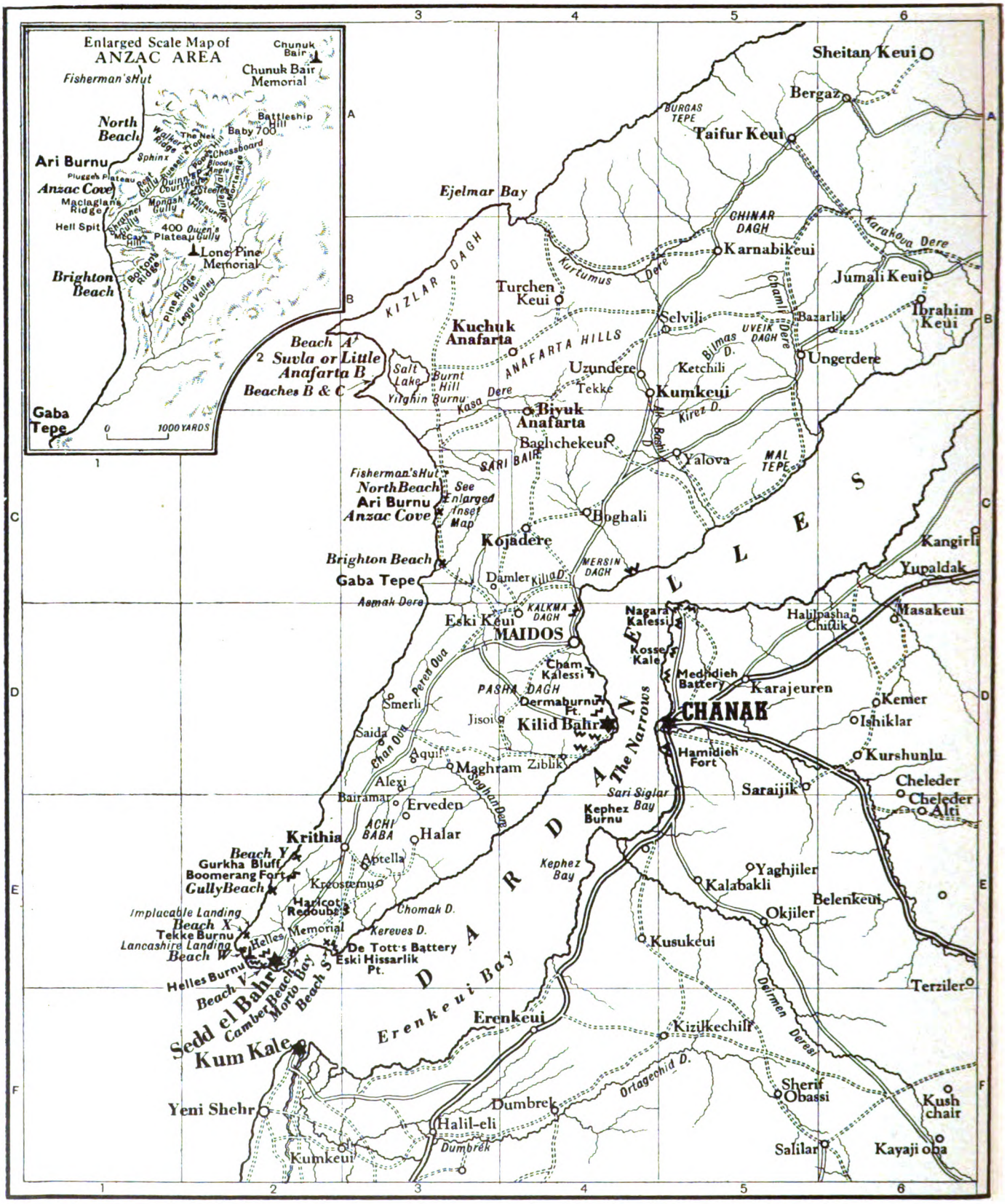

SCALE OF ENGLISH MILES

0 1 2 3 4 5 10

Roads — Main — Secondary ..... Paths

Fortified Towns ★

Landings & Beaches ✕

Rivers ~~~

Forts & Batteries ■

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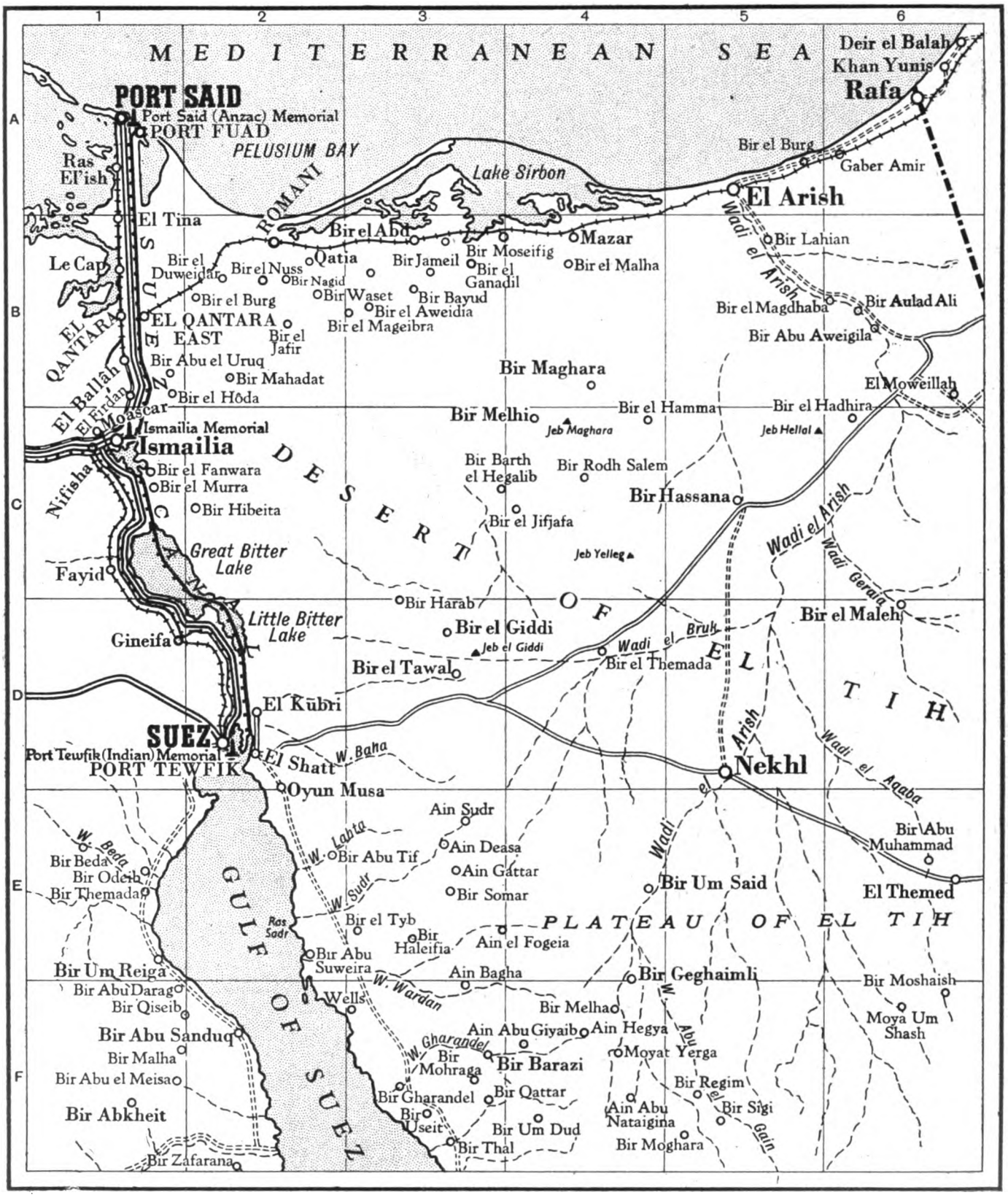

SCALE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

Roads — Main — Secondary
Paths
Railways — Double Track — Single Track
Canals
Rivers
Lakes

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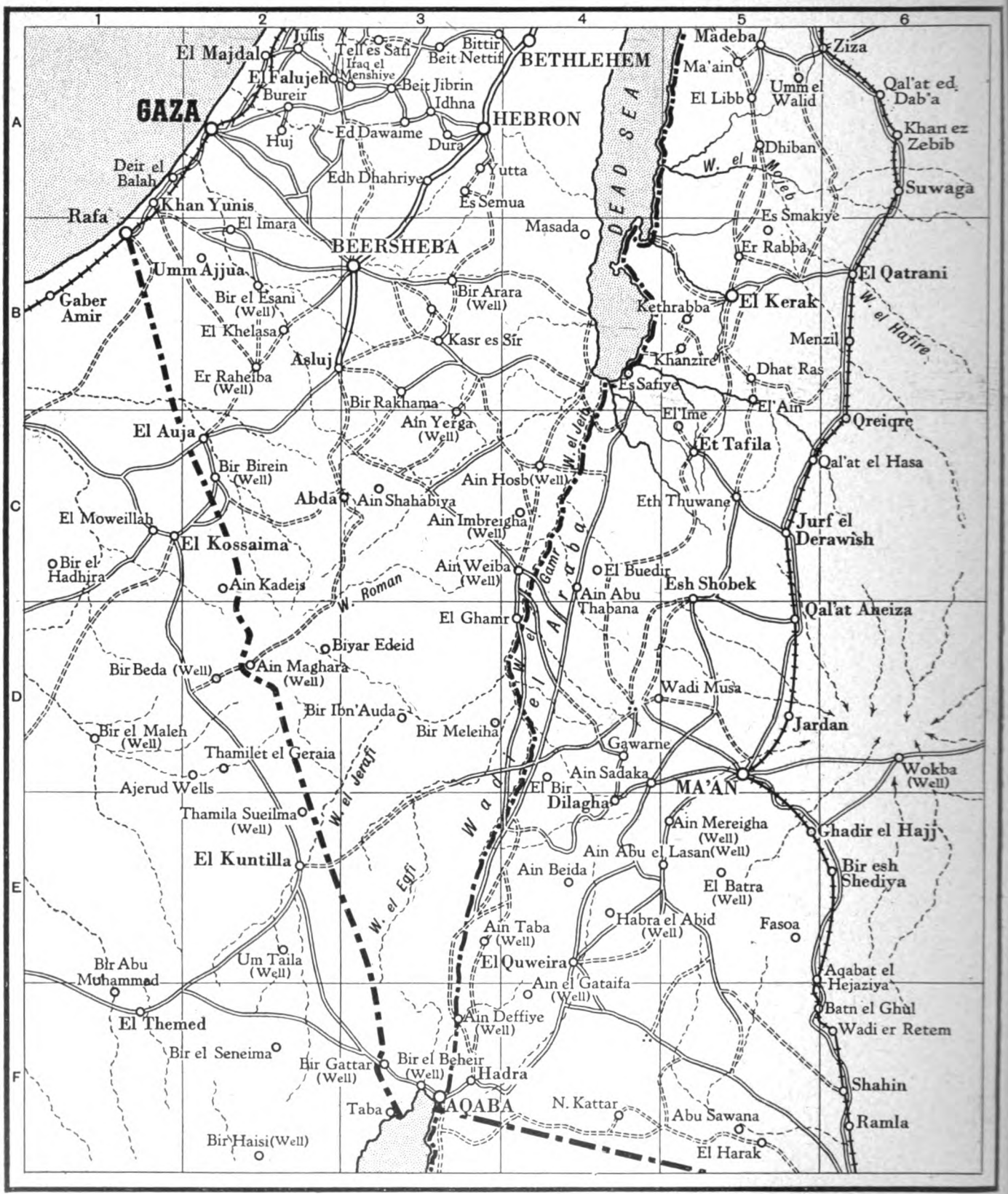

SCALE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

Roads ..... Main Secondary

Paths .....

Railways ..... Double Track Single Track

Canals .....

Rivers .....

Lakes .....

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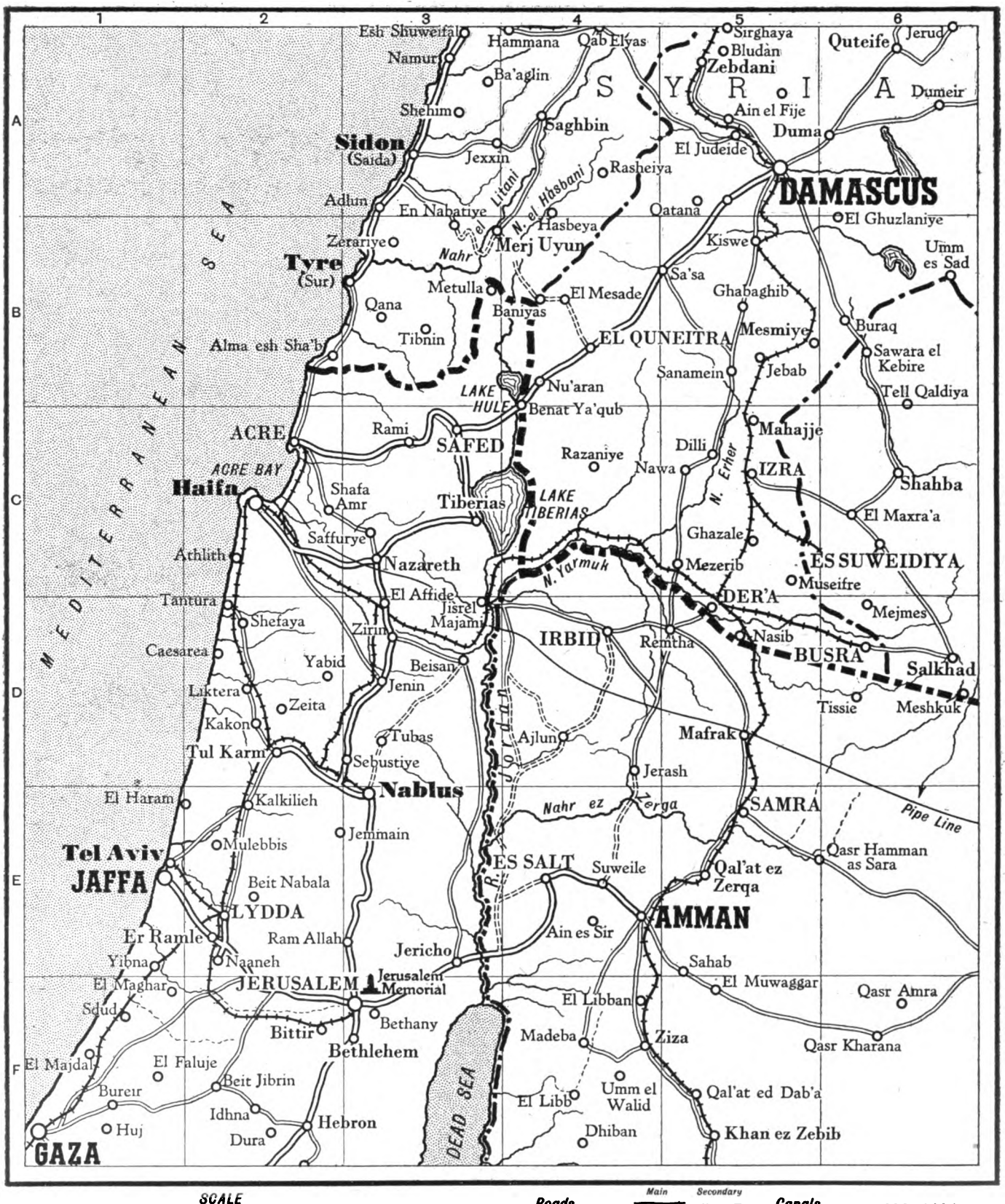
PALESTINE. JAFFA—DAMASCUS

MAP Q



SCALE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

Roads..... Main Secondary

Paths.....

Railways..... Double Track Single Track

Canals.....

Rivers.....

Lakes.....

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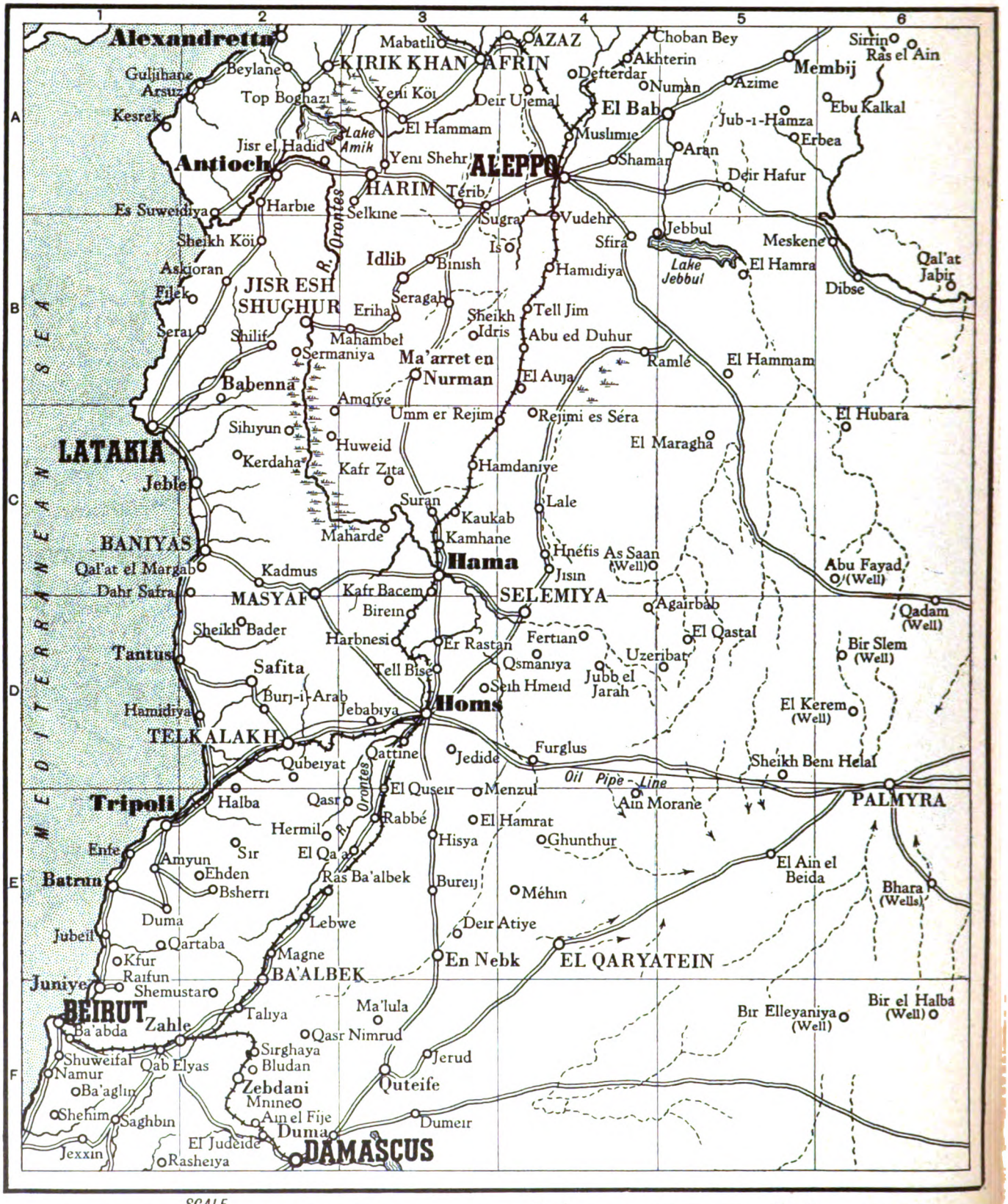

SCALE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

Roads
Railways
Marshes
Canals
Rivers
Lakes

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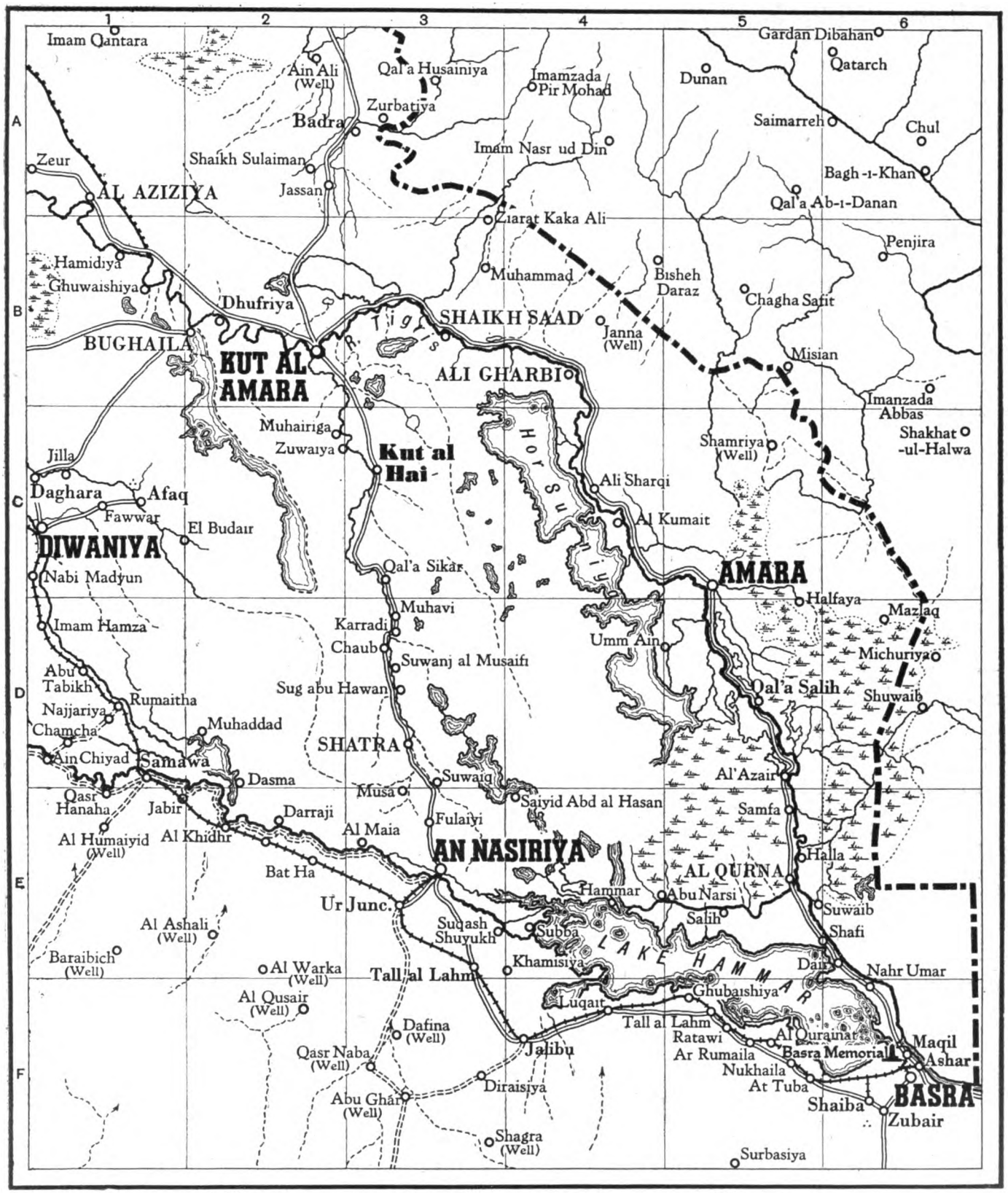
MESOPOTAMIA. BASRA—KUT AL AMARA

MAP S



SCALE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

Roads
Railways
Marshes
Paths
Canals
Rivers
Lakes

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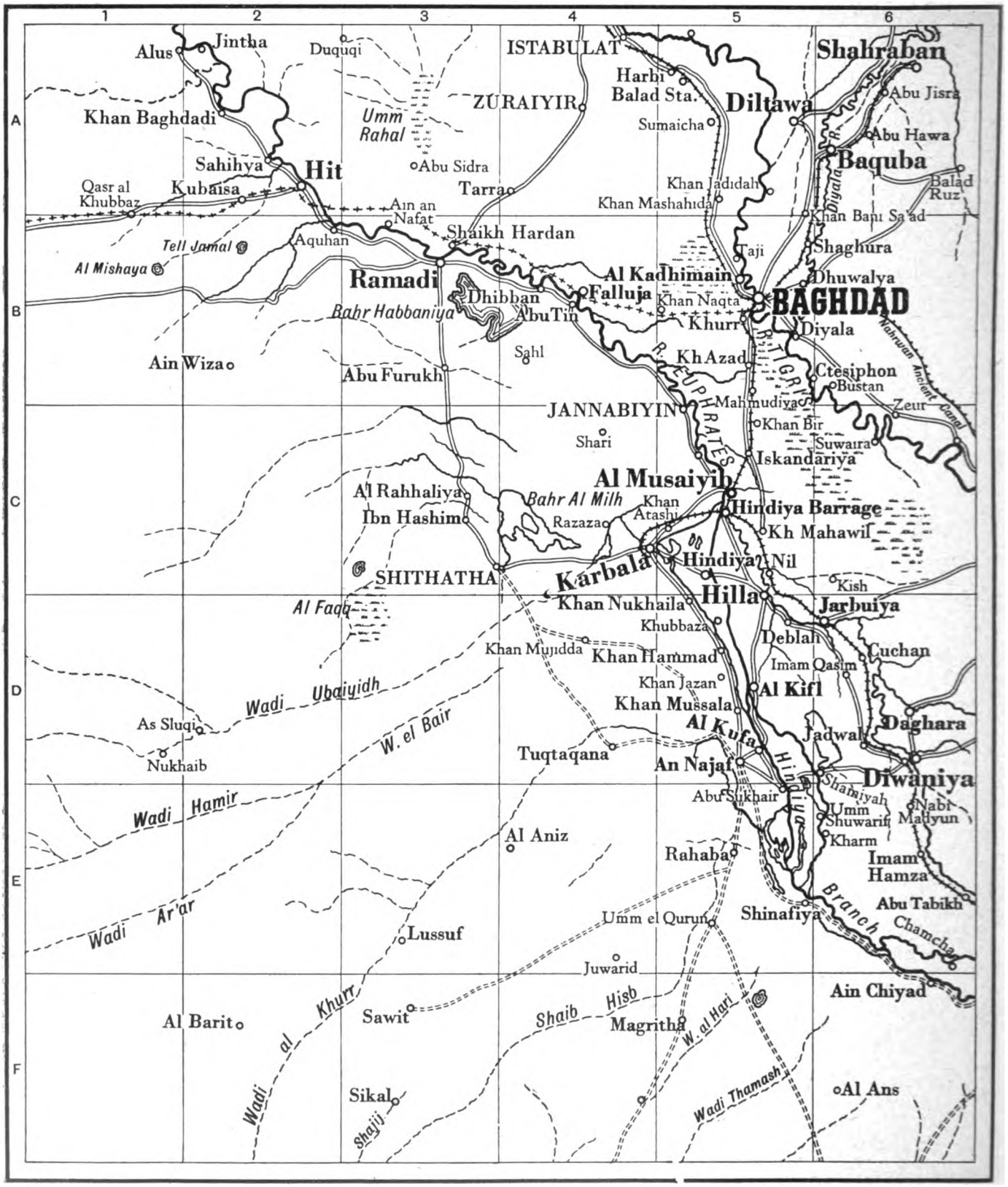

SCALE

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

Roads — Existing — Paths — Proposed

Railways — Existing — Proposed

Marshes

Canals

Rivers

Lakes

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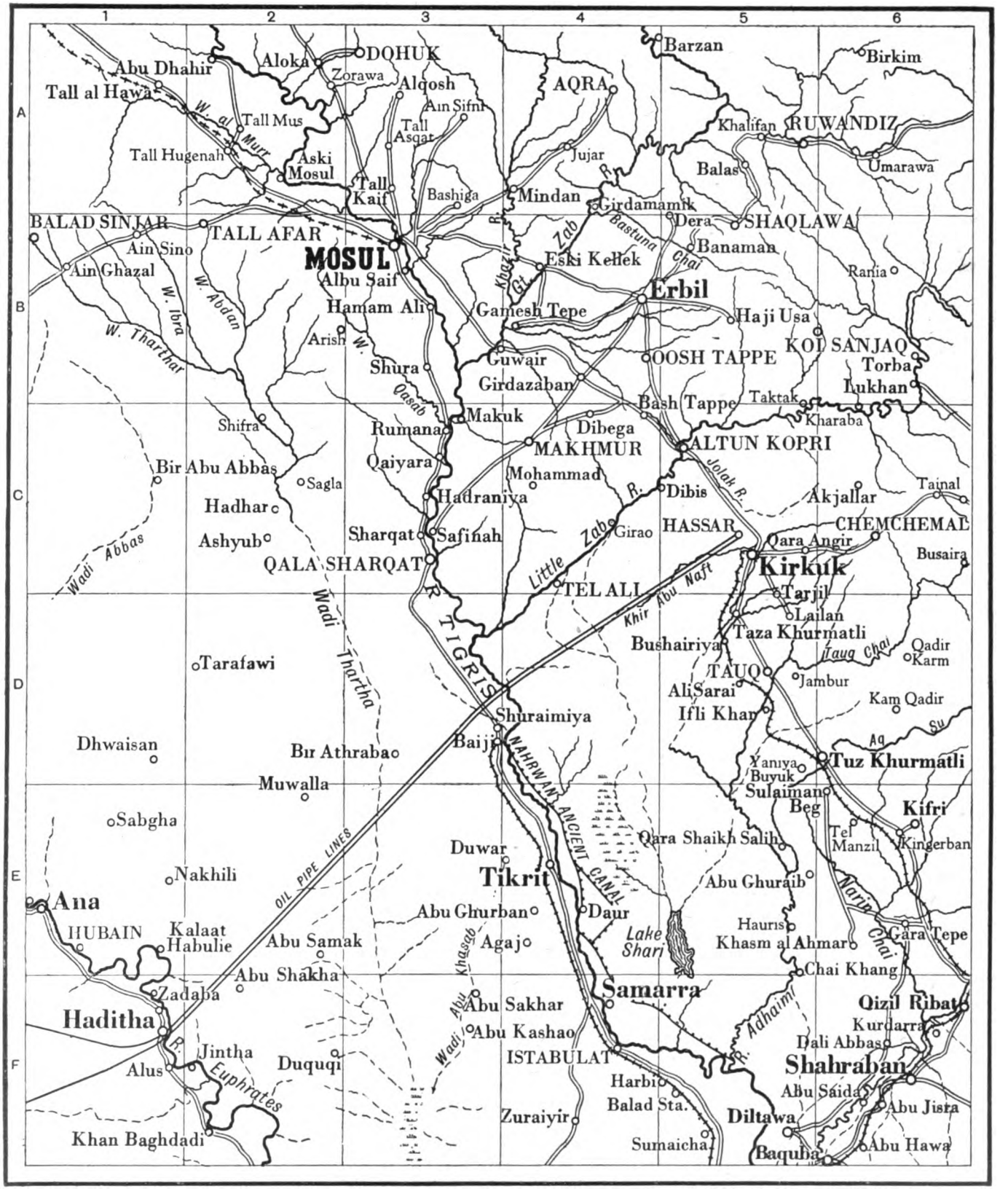

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MAP V

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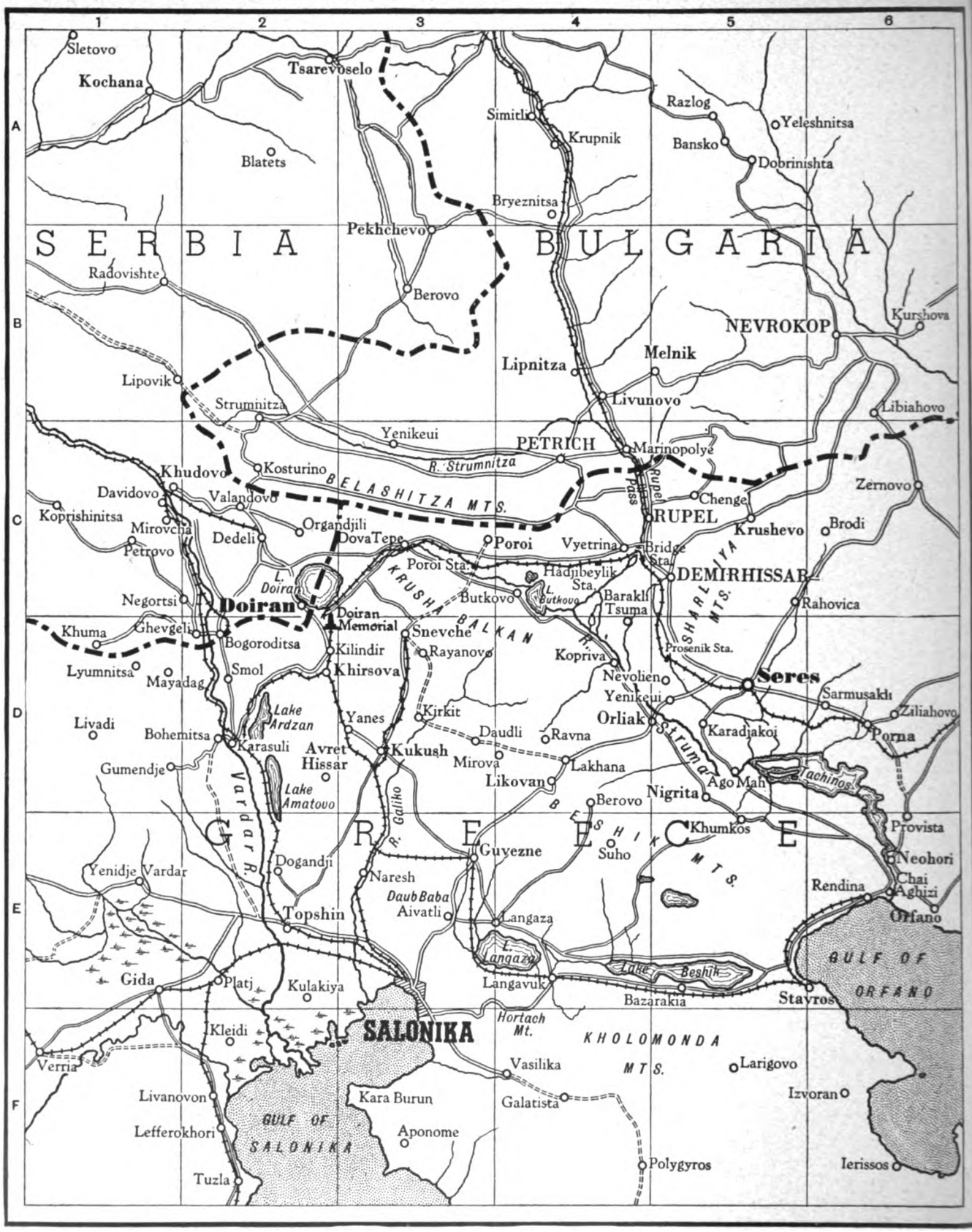

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